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THE MONTH

JUNE 1952

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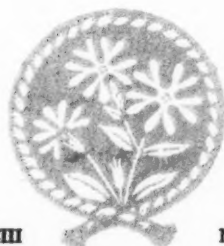
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CHATTO & WINDUS

HERBERT THURSTON¹

By

SIR SHANE LESLIE

FOR SO MANY YEARS Father Thurston was a lighthouse in Farm Street, peculiarly salvational to antiquaries, psychical researchers and baffled controversialists. Any of these orders of writers when in difficulty were liable to write or run round to Farm Street, though there was a better chance of buttonholing him in the British Museum where he could be sighted moving behind the seats or consulting volumes as abstruse and unique as himself. A time there was when people, who were prepared to walk from Farm Street to Beaumont before Mass, might have found the chance of drawing on his unfailing stores of knowledge during the journey, more than twice as long as the walk to Emmaus.

His admirers and disciples, who will multiply with the years, are presented with a brief but incisive biography by Father Crehan while his larger public, covered by Bollandists abroad and all who delve into mystical or psychical research at home, will find a treasure book and guide in the large compilation taken from his published papers.

What an exciting place Farm Street was in those days with Father Thurston to bring his bright rays of a spiritual variety on a new ghost story, or Fathers Pollen and Sydney Smith to engage in new lines of controversy or history—to say nothing of a sensational Sunday sermon from Bernard Vaughan which left the most exciting Sunday papers unread till Vespers! Had times been propitious, Landor might have devised an "Imaginary Conversation" between Father Thurston and his one-time neighbour at 11 Berkeley Square, Horace Walpole, who would invariably have sought advice on Gothic or medieval points while in the process of ornamenting Strawberry Hill, and might have learnt who was Fr. Walpole, S.J.!

¹ *Father Thurston*, by Joseph Crehan, S.J. (Sheed and Ward 12s 6d).

The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism, by Herbert Thurston, S.J. (Burns and Oates 35s).

A delightful chapter on the "Liturgical Revival" illustrates a strand in the many-coloured web of Thurstonian inquiry. Letters from Edmund Bishop mark the meeting of great and kindred spirits. Oscar Wilde would probably have called them "Lords of Liturgy." Behind his scholarship Thurston was striving to point out medieval continuity to Englishmen who could take the trouble to be interested. He had seen Maitland's great work on Canon Law in England overthrow the mighty Stubbs and leave him asphyxiated in the dust of his documents. Thurston did not join Freeman in buttering him from alternate tubs, as the Oxford rhymers had it. History was not his only field. Early at St. Beuno's he read a paper on mesmerism and thought-transference. He had made his first step as a "discerner of spirits" when he denied that all such were of diabolical origin. Could some be from the right as well as from the sinister?

Liturgy was still his delight. When was the Immaculate Conception first celebrated as a Feast? Edmund Bishop thought at Winchester before the Conquest. Father Thurston found it centuries earlier in the Irish *Martyrology of Tallaght*, and judged that it reached Ireland from the Copts in Egypt. But how did it reach England? Rubrics can be more fascinating than bloodstains to the detective-minded.

The Eucharistic Congress of 1908 gave Thurston his brilliant chance in editing the *Report*. In one paragraph he taught a bookful to the faithful of *Origines Liturgicae*. It is worth memorizing.

Just as the Rosary was a miniature Psalter, just as the scapular was a miniature religious habit, just as the Stations of the Cross were a miniature pilgrimage to the Holy Land, so the *Salve*, which has by degrees developed into the *Salut* and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, was originally a lay imitation of the most popular feature in the monastic Office.

That famous Congress marked the breach between the Catholics and the Liberals and sent hundreds of Irish working men into the small Labour Party. The feeble Asquith, frightened by Protestants, banned the Procession of the Sacrament in the streets of London. Coming events were prone to throw their shadows in those quiet sunset days, and while Father Thurston was later reading a paper at Cologne his whole audience ascended to the

roof to observe the arrival of the first Zeppelin! The lecturer reserved comment!

The most vital side of Liturgy is the growth of the Roman Mass. For this the fascinated reader has Father Thurston, Edmund Bishop and Adrian Fortescue to thank. Perhaps if the history and wonder of the Mass growth were explained by liturgical detectives to the cultured Anglican, he would take a step at least as far as the sacristy. Hitherto it has been chiefly Gregorian chants and Gothic arches which have acted like "springes to catch woodcocks." But Father Crehan must not call Pugin's Gothic "crotchety." Gothic appeals more than the Ignatian style of architecture to the medieval-minded.

As a controversialist Father Thurston was a "very parfait knight," resembling Arthur Balfour as a mental swordsman, sharp but unvenomed. He came into an arena still occupied by the Protestant *Passionata*, Maria Monk! She was withdrawn because Catholics so much enjoyed exposing her. Doughty opponents were Rider Haggard, who at least rode no more his hobby of an Immured Nun after Thurston had found her tomb concealed only bad controversial bricks for angry Protestants. He had the courage and erudition to meet and vanquish the uncouth and uncooing Dr. Coulton on points. He met his challenge by exposing ten palpable blunders in as many pages of Lea's *History of Confession and Indulgences*. Thereby he slit two birds on one rapier.

He lived through the troublous days of Modernism and a frank chapter shows how the Pollux (we nearly said Pollen) of Farm Street stood his ground while the Castor (Father Tyrrell) fell out with friends and finally fell away. The charitable and wise letters of Father Thurston in their correspondence do not survive: only Tyrrell's arrows, a little tipped in his embittered spleen. If Tyrrell was suffering from Bright's disease he was not responsible for all he wrote. Thurston was also an iconoclast, and his treatment of the Holy Rosary (not as a devotion but as an antique) sadly stirred the Dominicans. But Thurston knew when to stop and we are given the denial of the famous story that the dying Father Gallwey sent for him and said, "Bertie, spare the Holy Trinity!"

Thurston found it easier to pass his weapon through the amorphous matter of Frazer's *Golden Bough* than to uphold a

falling comrade's faith. Frazer's wishful believing that Asian folklore was the mother of Christian dogma had led him to trace the belief in the joyous Resurrection to Adonis and the coming of spring. Unfortunately Adonis was celebrated by a mournful ceremony in the summer! But what matter to the Cambridge School of misbelief as long as a stone in the Christian arch could be knocked out and nothing put in its place. When the Assumption of Mary was credited to Demeter, Thurston "made short work of Frazer in the process."

It was one thing to have to criticize a great historian like Acton, who though a Catholic attributed murderous motives to Pius V (who was a saint). In one case Acton by a lapse of the deep recessive memory made a mistake for Pius IV, over whose canonization the Church has never troubled.

It was another thing to deal with wild men like Coulton or Grattan Guinness, whose book about Rome Father Crehan amusingly renames *The Private Life of the Scarlet Woman*. Grattan Guinness might have been called *Doctor Apocalypticus* for he combined the eloquence of a Grattan with the intoxication in his more famous cognomen. Two wars mostly waged in Catholic countries seem to have wiped out such quaint characters as Guinness from English life to the great loss of our Chestertons and Thurstons, if we ever have such gladiators again.

It was as a "Trier of Spirits" that Thurston's most abiding mark will be found on Catholic thought. He came not to destroy but to analyse and if possible explain all psychical manifestations in terms of the Catholic Church. He was admirably equipped in every sense including recognition of the supra-sensory which he studied in saints, stigmatics and poltergeists. As a boy he had witnessed a striking instance of mesmerism and wrote, "I may confess that the impression that there are mysterious forces in nature of which we understand very little has remained with me ever since." Considering how immense a part the spiritualistic and ghostly played in his researches, the chapter recording it is far too short. It was in this field that Thurston led the interest and investigation taken by Catholics. Certainly the spirits were due to receive a considerable jolt when Tyrrell proposed joining the Society for Psychical Research with Thurston and wrote rightly, "I think Catholics ought to be represented in a movement that is going to be important." As a matter of fact Thurston joined alone in 1919

when the War had produced a wave of séances, and efforts on the part of the bereaved to communicate with the dead.

But Thurston had been at it for years, as a fascinating letter from Tyrrell shows in 1899: "Everard Feilding wants you, when next you go to Slindon, to visit a certain Leslie in the neighbourhood who keeps a choir of ghosts in his domestic chapel." We would gladly know more.

Father Thurston was bound to cross swords with his old Stonyhurst school-fellow Conan Doyle over spiritualism, into which "Sherlock Holmes" plunged over-credulously, without the arresting simplicity of a Watson. Curiously they both saw from different angles how great a blow to the materialism of the age could be delivered from the unknown twilights, where prophets are more at home than scientists. As Thurston wrote: "The Catholic Church has a system and an explanation."

Thurston himself speculated on souls whether in Limbo or in Purgatory and their inter-action upon souls on the earth. This brought a milestone in his life in 1917 when his Order from Rome called upon him to hold back his judgment. There was nothing for him to withdraw. He had made a mistake in raising improbable theories. After all, who knows (even the Holy Church) what the souls in Limbo or Purgatory are permitted to do by their Creator?

He recovered his poise and produced his useful but unspeculative *Church and Spiritualism*. He made a compromise. He rejected the trickery and declared for some diabolic activity in spiritualism, but he found some *natural* faculty in the reception of telepathy and clairvoyance. His final message left all in suspension both for himself, the Church and his disciples:

What I am most anxious to impress upon my readers is the fact that the time is not yet ripe for conclusions in this obscure subject. We have to collect data before we can pronounce.

Poltergeists are always as safe a field for investigators as brownies and fairies. It was with records of the medieval poltergeist that Thurston gave spiritualism a kind of ancestry out of the Past. To be practical, he found Mass or a Novena more effective than exorcism when this annoying form of the inexplicable took place.

Father Crehan has selected some of Thurston's most important studies in the *Phenomena of Mysticism* and made a collection of the greatest importance and fantastic interest. It is clear that Popes and theologians (helped by that subtle official "The Devil's Advocate") have not settled such questions as levitation or stigmatisms yet. This century may well conclude before we are farther upon the scientific or religious explanations than Father Thurston brings us.

Levitation is certainly a phenomenon amongst saintly or mystical people. But what of such outside records as those made of Home, the greatest of English spiritualists? A very careful account was made by the last Earl of Dunraven, when Lord Adare. The inquirer must compare the scrutiny given by the Devil's Advocate in religious cases with the secular examinations given by sceptical members of the S.P.R. Father Thurston found the former "often more remarkable and notably better attested than any to be found in the Proceedings of the S.P.R."

More satisfactory than either to the searcher is first-hand evidence. Lord Adare's evidence was privately printed and he himself lived long enough to afford the present reviewer a full account of what Home performed in the presence of witnesses. In the same way we find the Catholic Lord Shrewsbury recording a careful account of a bleeding Addolorata a century ago in Italy. Mr. T. W. Allies as an Anglican wrote a minute description in 1847 on the course of the blood-flow which had also struck Lord Shrewsbury who recorded that it "flowed upwards over the toes, as it would do were she suspended on the Cross."

In his search for witnesses of the same Father Thurston quoted two Oxford friends, who accompanied Allies and like him became Catholics. They were J. H. Pollen and J. H. Wynne. Not only witnesses but rare documents must be found to attest the supernatural cases of the past. Father Thurston often had difficulties. The printed record of St. Joseph of Cupertino (a confirmed leviathan or levitator) is a book of extraordinary rarity. Only two copies seem to survive and it is of great importance that he was beatified under Benedict XIV, who as Devil's Advocate previously was deeply cognizant of the evidence. In fact he was the Pope who published *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione*.

Father Thurston was lucky in finding in the British Museum a copy of the *Positio super Virtutibus* for the beatification of Father

Margil, a Franciscan missionary in Mexico who died in 1726 with a repute for levitation.

These instances touch on Father Thurston's immense erudition in hagiology. He could lay fingers on rarities and treasures the British Museum hardly knew that they possessed: and there, lonely in his chosen path of scholarship, we shall always recall him, moving with speed and sure direction upon the evidences he sought, and always willing to engage in conversation with friends who sought him and found him "sweet as summer."

Perhaps he did not live long enough to collect all his data, much less to formulate laws. He was like that great ghost-investigator Dr. M. R. James, who simply said towards the end of his life to the reviewer: "Depend upon it: these things are so but we do not know the Rules!"

The Holy See had only asked Father Thurston to suspend his judgment. Levitation for instance could be credited, but its explanation? "Theologians offer the rough and ready solution that in the case of holy people it is a manifestation of divine power but that in the case of sorcerers and mediums, it is the work of the devil." Father Thurston considered and wrote that "if a table can be suspended in the air, it is hard to see why a man cannot." Here again he would suspend judgment, but as he used to remark in the Museum, "the evidence is quite convincing," and for that reason his message to Catholics who had the taste and gifts for discerning spirits was not to leave all supra-sensory investigation outside the Church. Even as materialism was slowly disintegrating both in the chemical atom and in the mind of the chemist, so the time was approaching when men's busy curiosity would disentangle the phenomena of spiritualism, perhaps even find out the laws under which ghosts and poltergeists do operate.

ST. GREGORY OF TOURS

By

HARMAN GRISEWOOD

TIME HAS NOT DEALT GENEROUSLY with the figure who appears as "Greg. Turon" in footnotes to studies of the Dark Ages. Acquaintance with his books is mostly gained in the course of a historian's drudgery. As a sixth-century "source" he is necessary; as a saint he is all but obliterated. Gibbon's revenge for his hours of boredom is expressed as follows: "... in a prolix work—the five last books contain ten years—he [Gregory] has omitted almost everything that posterity desires to learn. I have tediously acquired, by a painful perusal, the right of pronouncing this unfavourable sentence." It is not much to the credit of Gibbon's successors that they have used language less harsh than his. Gibbon knew exactly what bored him; we confess our tedium with less assurance. The specialist scholars such as Dill or Kurth have written pleasantly enough about Gregory's history and of his attainments; but little sympathy is shown towards his character. Phrases of banter and even of scorn are used for his supposed family pride. Indulgent references are made to an alleged hypochondriacal tendency. Reproof and disgust are provoked by his credulity. And so St. Gregory of Tours is shown to those who nowadays care to read about him as an old gentleman combining pastoral zeal with amiable foibles, and ruling Merovingian Touraine rather as though it were a primitive Bassetshire.

There is no very disgraceful imputation in these impressions, but they play their part in helping us to forget that the nineteenth Bishop of Tours is one of the Saints of the Church. As an exemplar of sanctity, we are likely to conclude, he is not available to our own day. In spite of his abundant writing, his own spiritual life is as obscure as most of the other saints of the early Gallican

church who are mere names in Latin chronicles. What interest do we feel towards St. Lusor, or St. Gregory of Langres, St. Tetricus, St. Gallus, or St. Nicetius of Lyons? Yet surprise may awaken some curiosity when it is realized that this list is chosen all from Gregory's own relatives. St. Gregory's most indisputable and, I believe, unrivalled distinction is a strong family connexion, both on his father's and on his mother's side, with a long line of saints. At eight years old he was sent to be taught by his mother's uncle, who was St. Nicetius, the Bishop of Lyons; later his education was continued under the supervision of his father's brother, St. Gall, Bishop of his own native city, Clermont-Ferrand. For several years he studied with St. Gall's successor to the bishopric, St. Avitus. His father was descended from the first martyr of Lyons, Vettius Epagathos; his mother's grandfather was St. Gregory of Langres. St. Gregory of Tours was thus brought up in a tradition and atmosphere of saintliness somewhat as a young Whig nobleman was brought up in a tradition and atmosphere of politics.

In his preface to the *Liber Vitae Patrum*, written towards the end of his own life, St. Gregory discusses the question whether we should say "The Life of the Saints or the Lives." "The author Pliny," Gregory writes, "says in the third book of his *Art of Grammar*: 'the ancients spoke of the lives (*vitae*) of each one of us, but the grammarians thought that life (*vitam*) has no plural.' Thus it was obviously better to say 'the life of the Fathers' than 'lives,' because although there is a diversity of merits and virtues, yet one life of the body nourishes all who are in the world." And he goes on to say that his projected work on the saints would therefore be called "The *Life* of the Saints." Gregory was not an original thinker, and rarely taken with fanciful ideas. He was conventional and practical in his habit of mind. His interest in this question of singular or plural deserves more explanation than he gives it. To the disappointment of others, not only Gibbon, Gregory wrote more about the saints than about the Franks. He was deeply impressed by the saints as living channels of grace affecting our life day by day. And he was impressed, too, in his historian's mind by the unity shown by the group of saints to which his thoughts mostly turned. Not only is there an obvious historian's unity in the two hundred years from the episcopate of St. Martin of Tours to the ponti-

ificate of St. Gregory the Great, but there is a unity, as their chief biographer shows us, in the lives of the saints that were typical of those two centuries. Their lives, at a first reading, seem wearisomely repetitive not only in Gregory's short biographical essays; in the other sources, too, there is an obvious and apparently tedious similarity. Were these men, we may wonder, turned out upon a pattern? Were they made to be similar, as ships captains or jockeys are made similar, through a repetition of circumstances and a singleness of aim in confronting them?

It is true that in the long-drawn-out years of transition much the same pattern of circumstances faced the Catholic body in Gaul. To the old Catholics, such change as there was must have seemed for the worse. The power of Rome weakened. The barbarians' conquest grew more secure. The Gallo-Roman Catholic families were more and more surrounded by paganism or heresy. As the pressure intensified, an increasing responsibility to be the Catholic Church was put upon this band of survivors. They felt they were part of no development unless it were a religious development. They were part of no system unless it were a religious system. The unity of the Roman world was gone; there remained a unity in Christ. There was no significant past except the record of the scriptures; there was no evidence of protective power except the power of Christ. The power of Christ was manifest through the life of His saints. And their work was to be His saints. Such experiences and thoughts as these, I suggest, rather than pedantry, moved Gregory to argue in favour of his title "The Life of the Saints." The life of the Church, hard-pressed and straitened, relied urgently upon her saints. Gregory was the companion of saints. And he more easily felt identified with them—and "nourished" by them—than we, by the typical saints of our day.

His work in the world was the work of *aedificatio ecclesiae* begun by his predecessors, who were the first bishops in Gaul three hundred years before. About his vocation he was brave, clear-sighted and tenacious. And he needed to be. He lived in a military period. Though a non-combatant, he needed the warrior virtues. All he knew of peace was a relative slackening in the war tension. The civil rulers with whom he dealt were trained as war leaders. Everyone was armed. Everyone went in

fear of his life. Quarrels between persons or nations were settled by battle-axe. It was for this changing world that he had to guard the bishopric of the soldier saint, St. Martin; it was in this angry world that he had to lead men to the imitation of Christ. Conditions had grown sharply worse towards the end of the fifth century. When Gregory came to read the letters of Sidonius Apollinaris (died 480) they must have reflected an amplitude and elegance much as the Edwardian memoirs show to those who read them now in the strenuous fifties of our century. Sidonius, whilst Bishop of Clermont, had been part of the Roman resistance in the days of Gregory's grandfather. To most of the bishops of those days could be addressed the words of Paulinus of Nola:

Per te

Barbari discount resonare Christum

Corde romano.¹

Though the Gothic conquerors put Sidonius in prison, they did little to destroy the way of life to which the people of Auvergne were accustomed. But in 507 the army of Clovis marched south and the Gothic power in Central France was crushed in terrible slaughter at Vouglé. Clovis slew Alaric with his own hand and many of the Gallo-Roman nobility perished, including Apollonaris, the son of Sidonius. Gregory of Tours was born in 539. His was the second generation to accept the rule of the Franks. He was christened Georgius Florentius but he styled himself a Frankish subject. Though Clovis received the Roman chlamys from the Emperor Anastasius, it was not with a "Roman heart" that he gave thanks after Vouglé to Clothilde's God of battles. Clovis the Frank crossed into Aquitaine to liberate the people from their Arian rulers. "It grieves me," he said, "that these Arians hold a part of Gaul. Let us go forth and with God's aid bring the land under our own sway." To secure this conquest, so devoutly undertaken, during the remaining four years of his life, Clovis planned and carried through the assassination of several of his relatives and of their sons who had been his allies, so that he and his successors should be undisturbed in their acquisition.

¹ The barbarians learn through you to sing of Christ with hearts that are Roman.

This contrast between the defender of the faith and the political assassin mostly imposes some moral strain on those who would attribute a genuine Christianity to Clovis. Gregory has been universally derided for his attempt. The difficulty is important only if Gregory's title of saint is not cynically regarded. It is pointed out that Clovis' descendants were powerful rulers on whom Gregory's benefice depended. But this explanation is not well suited to a saint. Others, who are impressed by Gregory's probity and courage, go some way to meet the difficulty by insisting on the error of judging Frankish warriors as though they lived to-day. Yet this observation will not clear up the problem. It is one of the qualities of saintliness to overcome what Bertrand Russell calls the provincialism of time. How could St. Gregory—Gregory with whom God dwelt intimately, who corresponded intimately with God's will—speak of Clovis in terms such as these: "Daily the Lord laid his enemies low under his hand, and increased his kingdom because he walketh before Him with an upright heart and did that which was pleasing in His sight"? The point is important, because remarks such as this are used elsewhere by Gregory, not only about Clovis, but about others; and these remarks have estranged many modern readers from Gregory's character. It is pardonable that these passages in Gregory's text have not been closely studied by the commentators, since Gregory's character has not been their principal interest. When they are examined in their context it becomes plain that Gregory nowhere means to express approval of an action to which moral objection can be made. There is no necessary interpretation, for example, of the sentence quoted above to show that Gregory means that everything Clovis did was pleasing in His sight. Gregory disliked cruelty and deceit very strongly. It is much more probable, surely, that Gregory was not meaning to exalt Clovis as a pattern of virtue but is writing particularly about his conquests. Why were these important to Gregory so that he should assume a providential support of them? The fact is that the survival of the Catholic Church in the part of the world that Gregory knew seemed to him to depend upon these victories. It is hard to imagine the intensity with which this situation must have impressed itself on Gregory's mind.

The Catholics in Central Gaul were literally encircled by

enemies. The Goths in Auvergne had been reasonably tolerant, but there was no reason to suppose the Franks would be so. The Goths were heretics, the Franks were pagans. If the pagan Franks had conquered Gaul there was no natural centre that Gregory could see outside Rome for the Catholic Church. The conversion of Clovis must have seemed to the Gallo-Roman Catholics as miraculous and momentous as if the prayers to Our Lady of Fatima to-day were given a sudden and complete answer. It was vital to Gregory that Clovis became a Catholic and not an Arian. Arianism was repulsive to Gregory in a way that it is not easy for us to understand. We do not regard our separated brethren as deliberately offering an insult to the Blessed Sacrament by denying the Real Presence. Yet in the first impulse of Protestantism when Catholic men were being brought to make these denials and declare themselves protestants, those who remained Catholics would be liable to feel then that the Blessed Sacrament was being deliberately insulted. It would often be the case. Gregory felt that Arians were thus insulting Our Blessed Lord by what he knew to be a horrible and deliberate deformation of the Trinity. We tend to look upon these matters as theological disputation. To Gregory what was primary was the affront to Our Blessed Lord. It is only if we realize this that we can understand his use of violent language about Arianism—"foetidum" (stinking) he calls it in one place; to speak as an Arian about Our Lord was literally a corruption or putrefaction of the truth. And so it is vital to realize when questioning St. Gregory's outlook upon the Frankish kings that as Catholics they were for him deliverers. They made it possible to be publicly a Catholic. If Central Gaul was overcome by Goth or Lombard or Hun, the Church would have to go underground again. The persecutions were not far off in memory. And certainly not in Gregory's family.

Gregory kept steadily in mind the nature of the Frankish warriors with whom he had to deal. He wrote about them for the reasons that most men have written history. Among these reasons is a wish to clear the mind of a problem, to objectify it and to communicate to others what enlightenment the writer can bring to bear upon what has been for him obscure and arduous. Gregory's mission was to confront what we might nowadays call "the Frankish problem." For a modern reader of

his *History* it is this problem that Gregory continually poses and partly solves. To this difficult and complex problem he was "called," if we believe in vocation. And, if we believe in sanctity, it was his persistently discouraging and lonely work upon this problem that moulded his saintliness. His problem was one of maintenance and of progress—a problem of government and sanctification; the problem of maintaining the day to day life of the Church and the problem of deepening the Christianity of the Franks, its newest and most ferocious members.

He was a man that travelled north to his mission. He came to Tours in the late sixties of the sixth century, when he was still a young man under twenty-five, to be Archdeacon to the Bishop, St. Eufronius, who was a relative of his mother. Tours was still something of a frontier town. It had been the extreme northern limit of a romanized culture. Across the Loire was barbarism. When Gregory came to the city the whole of Gaul except the two western corners had been under Frankish rule for more than fifty years, yet the Loire was still a frontier in a cultural sense, and Gregory, who in habit was consciously a Roman, must have journeyed north feeling that he left behind him a more congenial and civilized homeland.

His journey took place in circumstances that were to be of the greatest importance to him. He had fallen gravely ill. His life was despaired of. He prayed by name in a particularly concentrated way to St. Martin. At once he felt impelled to visit his tomb at Tours, and though still seriously ill he began to start out on his journey. He wanted to get there before he died and insisted on pushing on to Tours though his companions begged him to turn back home. He was brought to Tours still alive, and endured three nights of prayer at St. Martin's basilica. After this he slept for a few hours and woke wholly recovered, not only in body. "All of my illness and the bitterness of my heart had departed," he said. Not only was he well, he adds, but for the first time in his life he could drink wine and enjoy it. From this time onward St. Martin became his patron and protector. But he was never robust in health and he died at the age of fifty-five. Gregory has often been laughed at for his instant recourse to St. Martin at the onset of even quite small indispositions. If he has a swelling on the tongue he licks the rails round St. Martin's tomb and the swelling is relieved. A fishbone is stuck in his

throat, and after praying in St. Martin's little church just outside the walls of Tours, the bone disappears. Gregory had no faith in the sixth-century doctors and few can blame him for this. Several times he recommends a *potio pulveris*, a draught made from the dust near St. Martin's tomb, rather than medicine made up by a doctor. Little understanding of Gregory's spirituality is possible unless his trust in the miraculous is well considered.

He always carried a little gold relic case shaped like a pea pod that had belonged to his father. He tells a story against himself about this as follows: He was travelling one day from Burgundy to Auvergne and was overtaken by a very severe storm. He took out his little reliquary and held it up against the black sky. The clouds at once parted. He was a young man at the time and, he explains, puffed up with pride; he boasted to his travelling companion of his virtue that had brought this grace upon him. At once Gregory's horse shied and he was badly thrown. He continues, "I perceived that this had come of vanity and it was enough to put me on guard henceforth against being moved by the spur of vainglory. For whenever it happened afterwards that I had the merit to behold any of the miracles of the Saints, I loudly proclaimed that they were wrought by God's gift through faith in the Saints."¹ Gregory at all times knew perfectly well that what was done to him as a result of prayer to the Saints, was done by the power of God.

In considering the miracles which Gregory relates—and he made a huge collection of them—it seems we are offered mostly what St. Thomas Aquinas² calls the third class of miracle: "when God does what is wont to be done by the operation of the natural principles." The principles of nature will seem different to men's intelligence at different stages of history. What will seem to be a supernatural cure of a fever to the sixth-century *medicus* may not seem so in Harley Street to-day. It is likely that a good deal that seemed miraculous to Gregory was in fact due to what we would now call natural causes. But that is not to say that Gregory was over-credulous or foolish in believing his cures to be miraculous. Miracle to Gregory was the day to day expression of God's protective power, whereas it is to us a rare intervention of Providence. Is it the end of the matter to say that

¹ *In Honour of the Blessed Martyrs*, ch. 83.

² *Summa contra Gentiles*, Bk. 3, ch. 101.

Gregory was sometimes piously deceived? Not so, if we remember Gregory's remark after his tumble from the horse. Gregory prayed to God in praying to the Saints, and, in ascribing to God's intervention what grace he received, he was right as when we pray in trouble for the trouble to recede we are right to ascribe to God's power the answer to our prayer, though in doing so we do not exclude what is meant by natural causes. God is the God of nature as well as of supernature. But after making all allowances for the change in knowledge and outlook since Gregory's day, there does seem to have taken place at that time, unless Gregory deliberately carried through a huge programme of fabrication, a continuous and frequent outpouring of grace that is properly called miraculous. One of the ablest of modern historians has called it "*une manifestation régulière et quotidienne de la puissance divine.*"¹

This atmosphere of miracle played its part in creating a religious culture. That culture was not—certainly not in Gregory's time—typically superstitious. But it was absolutely trusting in God's power. It was firmly attached to a saintly model and it believed staunchly in rewards for the good in this world as well as in the next and in the punishment by worldly adversity for wrongdoing. It is easy to think of Gregory's spiritual habits as a decline from what had preceded him—as a phase of religious "barbarism" in relation to which St. Augustine or St. John Chrysostom had been civilized. But in fact he more truly represents fresh religious impulses which were to receive a full development under Pope Gregory the Great and thereafter. There was, for example, the impulse of a spirituality which Gregory seems to have learnt chiefly from St. Avitus in Clermont, that was Lerinian in origin.

What is now the Midi was for Gregory's world an important cultural centre. Provence was a focus where the remains of the old Roman tradition gathered; but it was not principally a centre of survival. It was also a dispersal point for the Lerinian tradition. In Gregory's time the great influence in this tradition was the reforming spirit of St. Cesar of Arles. Near Gregory's diocese at Poitiers a convent had recently been founded by St. Radegund based upon the rule of St. Cesar. Gregory's niece, Justinia, was prioress of this convent, and he writes many pages describing a revolt against the authority of the abbess. This was not only an

¹ G. Kurth, *Études Franques.*

outbreak against authority but a shocking offence against the Lerinian tradition, and as such is part of Gregory's Frankish problem. The important point of principle for Gregory was the claim by some of the nuns, who were connected with the royal family, to be exempt from the discipline of the convent. If this were allowed, the relation of the Church with the royal power would be endangered. Gregory took especial pains to see that the offenders were suitably rebuked and the religious authority upheld. He wholly succeeded. This episode and its consequences is very typical of Gregory's world. Matters would have proceeded very differently at Byzantium.

Gregory's outlook was strikingly free from what Duchesne calls the "*broussailles de la theologie byzantine*" (the brambles of Byzantine theology). His spiritual development was in open country, bare of ornament. His reading had been much less various than, for example, St. Augustine's, who died a hundred years before Gregory was born. And this is not altogether an accident of history or a consequence of the barbarian invasions; it was also a deliberate turning aside from classical studies and a concentration upon scripture. It was ascetical but not in the manner of the Eastern anchorites. The men who shared Gregory's work drew their spiritual strength from the monks of the Lerins islands. But in their work they had to deal with the great world of the mainland. They were formed by a tradition that was unworldly and timeless, but they had to live close up to the world's problems. Daniel Rops has described the Lerin monastery of St. Honorat as a "nursery for bishops."¹ He was thinking particularly of its early days in the fifth century, of St. Hilary of Arles and St. Faustus of Riez. Gregory was not in the direct line of descent from these. He was nourished by other elements, but mainly it was this austere and practical spirituality which formed him. It was not only St. Avitus at Clermont, nor St. Cesar who were teachers of this tradition. It was widespread before these, and it remained a distinctive influence till it merged with the mainstream of medieval monasticism. Gregory and his fellow bishops, through its exercise in government gave it a particular quality of engagement with practical affairs. It was this spirituality which Christianized the Franks, and it is upon the Christianized Franks that Europe is built. "The foundations of Europe,"

¹ *L'Eglise des Temps Barbares*, ch. II.

wrote Mr. Christopher Dawson in 1932, "were laid in fear and weakness and suffering—in such suffering as we can hardly conceive to-day even after the disasters of the last eighteen years."¹ The further disasters of the next eighteen years do nothing to diminish the force of this statement; rather they have served to deepen yet further our understanding of the conditions that confronted Gregory. Mr. Dawson goes on: "And yet the sense of despair and unlimited impotence and abandonment that the disasters of the time provoked was not inconsistent with a spirit of courage and self-devotion which impelled men to heroic effort and superhuman activity."

It is easy enough to be overwhelmed by the picture of horror in Gregory's chronicle, which we read to-day with an especial sympathy; but a more important picture is of these cruel and violent men struggling nevertheless to be the followers of Christ. Not only is Gregory's story a record of avarice, deceit, planned assassination by father of son, by mother of daughter, but it is also a story of how under spiritual influence men were deterred from these gross offences. St. Gregory's role was different from that of the first bishops who met the barbarian impact. Their problem was endurance and resistance. His was acceptance and inclusion. He was not called to defend Troyes as did St. Loup, or to die in his cathedral as St. Nicaise at Rheims, or to arm the city as St. Aignan at Orleans. His was a complex task. The conquerors were already baptized into eternity. They now had to be Christianized in the world.

Gregory's Franks accepted the ecclesiastical organization as they found it. The danger was not that they should destroy the Church, but that they should dominate it and that it should be annexed for political purposes. In one sense Gothic tolerance was an easier problem. The Arian Goths knew Catholicism as the old religion and the religion of the vanquished. It could remain intact, within a State system of rule by those of another Church. But the Frankish kings were Catholics; they were part of the Bishop's flock. When Gregory was consecrated Bishop of Tours he was thereby preferred to what was the most influential see in Gaul. His first problem was the maintenance of ecclesiastical government. In miniature we see portrayed the greatest political

¹ *The Making of Europe*, by Christopher Dawson (Sheed and Ward, 1932).

problem of the Middle Ages—the relationship of Pope and Emperor. There was the Bishop of Tours and there was the civil governor—the Count of Tours, the King's agent. Gregory's task was not so much to exemplify a principle of harmony—that was to come much later—but to be a Christian bishop and to Christianize the civil rulers.

These men were crafty, avaricious and cruel, but they were obstinately Catholic. They stubbornly adhered to a religion that denied these impulses—a religion that drew men to truthfulness, to self-denial and to mercy. The Franks were not barbarians in the sense that we may think of the tribes in Africa as barbaric, to whom missionaries now bring the Gospel. They were no longer the noble savages of the *Germania*. For four centuries since Tacitus wrote they had been part of a civilized development. There was little about them that was naïve. They were experimental, ingenious people. Their rulers were restless, tireless, argumentative men who led a warrior host always on the march, but always cherishing the idea of settlement and home. History had schooled them to the notion of "no abiding city." The Merovingian princes were careful men who plan and listen, men who use the power and glory of this world but whose minds reach out to ultimate things. Men who for generations before Clovis had been "foederati" of the Roman imperium and who still looked to Rome as to some secret source of honour. These men would be humbled before Christ only by the full weight of the Christian religion. What they needed was something as hard as they and as full and rich. They needed to meet their match. And in the ranks of the Gallo-Roman bishops they met it.

The Franks made a deadly world of terror and violence. They opposed the Church not with persecution nor with heresy, not with indifference nor hate, but with human sinfulness upon the grand scale. If a saint is to contend with the iniquity of this world, Gregory could have wanted no more favourable situation. There were drunken bishops, kings who would not part with their concubines, messengers with poisoned daggers in their satchels, agents who would devise thoughtful tortures for the kings' enemies; there was perjury and lust, treachery and revenge. These are the elementary fruits of man's evil everywhere and at all times. But we do not experience them at full strength so to speak every day of the week. Yet Gregory lived so. The poignance

of his day is the greater for being juxtaposed to a world that was very different. His family had lived in peace and piety at their Roman villa in Clermont. Gregory reclined at table in the Roman fashion. The Church had been in Gaul for three hundred years; there was orderliness and tradition in the heart of things. It is against this background that the calculated murders of Fredegond seem terrible. She is the entrancing villainess of his story. It is interesting to observe how free Gregory was from our own natural inclination to dramatize this palace serving-woman who became Chilperic's mistress, and then his queen. He writes about her coldly, more as though he were inscribing a police dossier than presenting to us an archetypal figure of the *femme fatale*. Fredegond was insatiable, implacable, and clever. She dispersed for twenty years a network of devotion and hatred throughout three kingdoms. So far as we know she was outwitted only once and that by chance, when a sound of screaming brought in the servants before she had quite finished murdering her daughter with her own hands upon the lid of a jewel chest. Through this monotonous repetition of wickedness there flows an equally repetitious current of miracle and prayer.

Gregory's role was that of a great prelate in face of the world's perversity. He met it with his own holiness. He brought to his position the advantages of birth and wealth and experience. These would have yielded him nothing without holiness. He had natural gifts of tact and acumen. But these could have been used for good or evil. What the Frank respected were not these virtues but the invincible strength of personal holiness. We are apt to wonder nowadays—and sometimes grow a little cynical at the reflection—why is it that most of the great bishops of Gregory's day are saints? But if we consider thoroughly the nature of their task we are led to conclude that only a saint could carry it out. The wonder is that so many could be found fit for so heroic an undertaking. If Gregory had once faltered before Chilperic, if he had once consented to the queen's intrigues, not only would he himself have been ruined, but the Church that he guarded would have been overwhelmed by a secular tyranny. The temptations of his world were of the ordinary sort. What seems extraordinary is the scale and intensity of them. For a Christian man the anchorite's cave would have been a joyous refuge. The bishop could not take this course. His work was in

the world. This gives a special meaning to the long nights of prayer in St. Martin's church. It was here, no doubt, that Gregory gained the light and the strength for the day's work.

Gregory was constantly concerned with questions of justice, and often these involved a court trial before the king himself. The culprit and his associates were punished by appalling tortures and mutilations before being put to death. There are many instances where Gregory takes great pains to beg for the life of these criminals, or to diminish their sufferings. And he pleads, of course, even for those who are dangerous to him personally—men, for instance, who have plotted against him. He has an almost scrupulous modesty about recording any event which might directly show up his own virtue, and does so only when the events are important to his historical narrative. The bruises when he fell off his horse after the thunderstorm seem to have remained with him all his life. He praises many good men. But there was none to praise him except the congratulatory poems of his friend, Fortunatus, and these tell us more of the poet than of Gregory. But he cannot withdraw himself altogether from the events that he has made so vivid, and in which he played so vital a part.

Though his miracles are commonplace and his virtues may seem unremarkable, we are able to see a firm outline to his own saintliness through his participation in events. Here we see a young man, delicate in health, riding north to a hard mission: at death's door, asking his life of St. Martin, and when given it vowing it to St. Martin for Christ's Church at Tours. A man who for ten years upheld the rights of Christians against a king who hated him; a man who for twenty years had to withstand the malignity of one of the most evil women of whom record survives. A man who had to keep the routine of sacrament and liturgy whilst the brutal traffic of war streamed through Tours year in and year out, who had to uphold the dignity of the human person in face of the horrible practices of mutilation; a world in which the ordinary means for the interrogation of suspect persons was torture; a man who had to uphold a notion of purity in a world where the standard of conduct was often the physical strength of lust in competition with the physical strength of defence. Nothing but a full deployment of the Christian virtues could prevail against so aggressive an onslaught

across the whole range of wickedness. From our standpoint fourteen centuries later Gregory seems poignantly under-equipped. There was no development, for example, such as we know, of the devotion to Our Lady. The balanced wisdom of St. Benedict's Rule had scarcely begun to spread from Italy. There were the psalms and the patristic homilies. This was not much by our standards for Gregory's spiritual mind to feed upon. And yet he constructs, lacking much that we would call to our aid, what was exactly appropriate. It is as though the Frankish vices themselves drew from him each their necessary healing virtue. It was as though wickedness had the initiative; its role was the solicitation of goodness.

One day he was in St. Martin's Church with his mother. They saw together in a vision a vast procession of suffering people who were relieved by invocation to St. Martin. His mother asked Gregory afterwards why he did not write down what they had seen. Gregory answered that he was not a literary man. His mother said that nowadays most people are ignorant of literary skill and would prefer to hear what Gregory had to say in the way he would naturally write it. And so he tells us he resolves to write "in grief and fear"—grief that so much of the wonder of God has not been known before, and fear because, as he put it, "I am a rustic." He cheers himself by the thought that if God can make an ass speak he can bestow the gift of words upon Gregory. This procession of maimed creatures is not unlike the record of moral deformity that Gregory puts before us throughout his history. For those oppressed by disease, prayer in St. Martin's Church was often a solution. And for these others, oppressed by depravity, the prayer of St. Martin's disciple and successor was also a solution. It was a solution in which the perverse and wayward Franks played a part. They, too, contributed. Their wrongdoing was St. Augustine's "*Etiam peccati*." They plagued him with wickedness, and in his response to them he was exalted. They tormented him with suspicion and malignity. He brought them the gifts of the sacraments. For a holy man to live at such close quarters with the vices is to live at full stretch. It was scarcely possible to live moderately. One might, of course, pendulate between villainy and penance. But for a man of developed powers a life that was evenly and moderately good can scarcely be imagined. To live consistently

in the Catholic obedience must itself have forced you to an heroic undertaking. Nothing shows that the environment of evil offered much to Gregory by way of temptation. But temptation is not the only trial that evil provides. Wickedness is not only to be met with disdain and loathing. That was the way of St. Columbanus from Bangor and Gaul rejected him. Gregory confronted his environment in a spirit that was gentler and more practical. His object was to contain the enemy. The energy of their evil must be equally matched not only in intensity but in extent. Where sinfulness was on so grandiose a scale goodness must be equally monumental. His work was not only in detachment from the world but in engagement with it. He was called upon to intercede for the cities of the plain not only at the altar of St. Martin's Church, not only in long vigils and in lonely austerities; but in the noisy court-room at Tours and at dinner with the king. And so we see him achieving greatness in virtue by a daily and divinely guided improvisation upon his environment and in contact with it at all points; challenged at every turn by human grossness; and redeeming the time with compassion, reparation and suffering.

PADRE PIO DA PIETRELCINA¹

By

C. C. MARTINDALE

WE HAVE RECENTLY been warned against too great a credulity and a kind of greediness for miracles. Alongside of this may be placed a conceited scepticism which refuses to recognize the working of Providence in any part of human history. But it remains, and the Vatican Council has defined it, that miracles do take place and can be recognized. In one way, nothing can be more marvellous nor significant than the very existence of the world and its "diurnal course"; but from time to time God challenges us, and we hardly dare refrain from asking whether in some special way "the finger of God is here"; and this is something we must not fail to expect even in our allegedly unbelieving times.

Pietrelcina is a tiny district in the province of Benevento. Here Orazio Forgione and his wife, Maria Giuseppa, had a small property, and by constant hard work supported themselves and five children. Even so, Orazio had often to go to America to earn the money needed for their education—the parents were "analphabetic." On 25th May, 1887, a son was born and baptized Francesco the next day.² We read that his boyhood was quiet and

¹ Besides many lesser publications that I have consulted, and the bulletin of the *Casa di Solievo della Sofferenza*, I have used Lorenzo Patri's *Cenni Biografici di P. Pio* (1951), the first book to receive full ecclesiastical approbation; *La Prodigious Storia di P. Pio* (1951), by Prof. D. Argentieri; Piera Delfino Sessa's *Padre Pio* (1949); Alberto del Fante's *Per la Storia* (7th edition, 1950) and his *Fatti Nuovi* (1951), and of course Dr. G. Festa's *Misteri di Scienza e Luci di Fide* (2nd edition, 2nd re-issue, 1949). A short book, *Credo*, has quite recently appeared in Brazil, but I have not seen this yet. It is intended primarily for working-men readers. I thank Sgr. Abresch for his permission to use his photographs. Still, I wish to emphasize my repugnance to using any photographs; nor would I even have written this article were it not for the *volte-face* executed by ecclesiastical authority, which permits such publicity to a living man. It would be selfish and perverse to dissociate oneself from any such general and authorized activity.

² Orazio and Giuseppa strikingly resemble the parents of Jacinta and Francisco Marto, of Fatima, even in feature, and still more in their simple geniality,

self-contained; how at five he promised himself to St. Francis, and, at the age of nine, was found by his mother sleeping on the floor with a stone for pillow. At first his education was a failure—not because he was slow, for under a different teacher he progressed rapidly. But, to persuade him to study, his father said, "If you learn, I will make you a monk! A Mass-monk, not a begging-monk." Then Orazio found that the boy must have a Latin grammar; it cost fourteen *lire*; thirty years later his son repaid this! Orazio returned the money, but Francesco sent it back again. This education cost five *lire* a month, the price of half a load of wheat; "but the boy ate another half-load, too." One writer says that Francesco at this time felt he must be like "the Lord *umanato*" which suggests to me at least more than the technical word "incarnate": "Christ in the full sense human"; though one writer takes it as interpreted by Padre Pio as equivalent to Christ crucified. On 22nd January, 1903, he entered the Capuchin noviciate at Morcone.

The pressure of a noviciate, introspection, prayer and penance, especially on one unaccustomed to so enclosed and regimentalized a life, can be extreme. Nervous exhaustion is hardly avoidable. The lad became so ill that between each migration from house to house for study he was sent by his humane superiors back to Pietrelcina. Once he could not eat for a whole fortnight. "If he must die," said Orazio, "he must die at home." On his way back, he kept feeling better; on arriving, he said, "Mamma, what is there for supper?" It was turnips, well prepared in oil. He ate the portions of all three of them. Eventually on 10th August, 1910, he was happily ordained, and his family went to Benevento for his first Mass. But again Francesco was sent home and remained to help the aged arch-priest of Pietrelcina, Don Salvatore Pannullo, whom he called Zi' Tore, and Piuccio. As this priest wanted to keep him at Pietrelcina, Padre Pio (as by then he was) actually wrote to Rome asking to be secularized. However, when permission came, he recalled that he was "promised" to St. Francis.

Meanwhile the people had been complaining to Don Salvatore

hospitality, uprightness, and the true dignity of the peasant. Here, too, the parents were affectionately called Zi' (uncle; aunt), just as Señor Marto was and always will be "Ti Marto." Both Orazio and Giuseppa have died, tended by their son, by then a priest, in the house of a devoted American lady, Miss M. Pyle.

about the inordinate length of the young priest's Mass; and the sacristan finding him one day immovable behind the altar, thought he was dead. The old arch-priest, his sole confidant during these almost seven years, later on said much of the graces given to Padre Pio, and also of the violent temptations and diabolical assaults he then endured. But either he made no written record of this or it is not unnaturally kept private for the present.¹ Still, we know of one incident. Padre Pio had built himself a little hut (like the Carmelite hermitages) to which he retired for prayer. On 20th September, 1915, feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis, his mother came to call him to dinner. He left the hut, wringing his hands. "Are you playing the guitar?" said she. He made a curt answer, but ate a good meal. But from that time he began to suffer such acute pains that Don Salvatore wished him to omit Mass, anyhow on Fridays. This he would not do. But Don Salvatore afterwards said that Padre Pio told him, that same evening, that he had received "invisible stigmata," like St. Catherine of Siena's.

In 1916 he went to Naples for his military service and was given work in the chief hospital there, but his health collapsed, his temperature soaring so high and so abruptly that it constantly broke the thermometer. He was sent home: the same thing occurred, his temperature rising to over 48 degrees Centigrade, so that they had to use a bath-thermometer to take it.² Then he was sent first to Foggia; but partly because the air was considered malarial and partly because he was becoming a magnet to the multitudes, he was moved to the tiny friary of San Giovanni Rotondo, 557 metres up the landward slopes of Monte Gargano.³ Here, on 20th September, Padre Pio, kneeling in the choir,

¹ There is a natural tendency to embroider this and assimilate it to St. John Baptist Vianney's experiences. But the only author I know who dwells on this gives no evidence to support it.

² I have amused myself in the hospital where I write this by comparing my ordinary thermometer, which registers up to 106 Fahrenheit, with the bathroom one, which goes up to 150. 48 degrees Centigrade would be about 118 degrees Fahrenheit, and presumably fatal.

³ St. Camillus de Lellis, also born on 25th May, whose life I ventured to outline, helped to build the lower part of this about 1570. The little church, embedded in the friary, has no façade of its own nor a campanile. It is truly Franciscan, and may it never be improved or superseded! An American and an English Capuchin friar reside in the convent and are available for spiritual assistance to English-speaking people.

uttered a cry, and was found prostrate and having the Stigmata in hands, feet and side. I think, so far, I have carefully mentioned any symptom that might suggest that Padre Pio was a neurotic or in some way an abnormal subject. Henceforward, nothing of the sort will be discernible in him unless it be assumed that a *stigmatisé* must be a "pithiast," i.e., abnormally suggestible or what they used to call by the very loosely-used word hysteric. His story now is concerned with his stigmata as such, with secondary phenomena, and his apostolate.

The first scientific inspection of the stigmata was made in June and July, 1919, by Dr. M. Romanelli, head of the civil hospital of Barletta. His report fills eight closely printed pages, but since his views practically coincide with those of Dr. Festa mentioned below, all I would say here is that he witnessed that the wound in the side was not superficial but bled freely with blood "of an arterial character"; that the wounds in the hands were, when he first saw them, covered with a red-brown membrane and did not bleed, but by pressing his fingers to the back and front he could feel a gap (*vuoto*) such as to suggest that the transfixion was complete. He repeated this "barbarous experiment" several times, morning and evening, causing extreme agony to Padre Pio. It was harder to manage on the feet, simply because a foot is thicker than a hand; but, after a minute examination of the priest's physique, and speaking exclusively as a doctor, he said that the wounds eluded all classification. In July, 1919, Professor A. Bignami, an agnostic, of the Roman University, considered that the wounds in hands and feet *were* superficial; they did not bleed when he saw them; but the wound in the side was cruciform, whereas Romanelli saw it as a single slit, parallel to the ribs. Bignami also raised an objection, because at first Padre Pio had been advised to use a tincture of iodine to cauterize, if possible, the wounds, and to protect them against infection. This objection, however, was later dropped, if only because he no longer used iodine, which had never produced its proper results. Instead, he washes with ordinary water and a coarse soap, and wears stockings and (save at Mass) half-gloves or mittens.

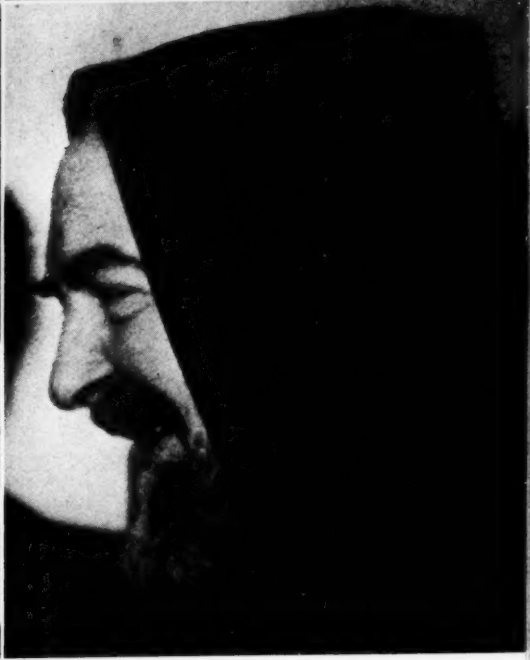
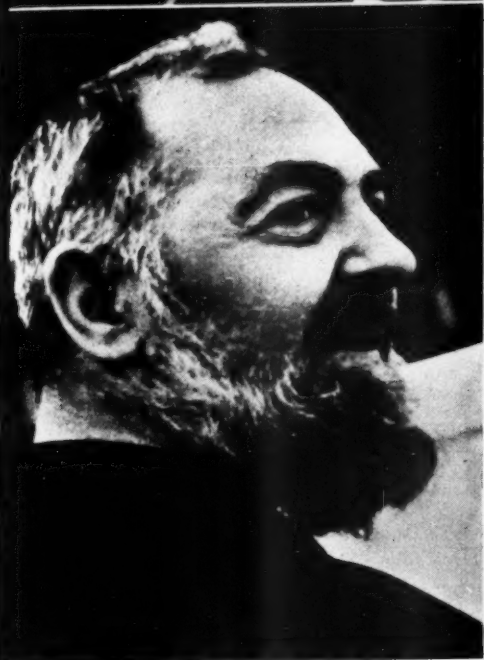
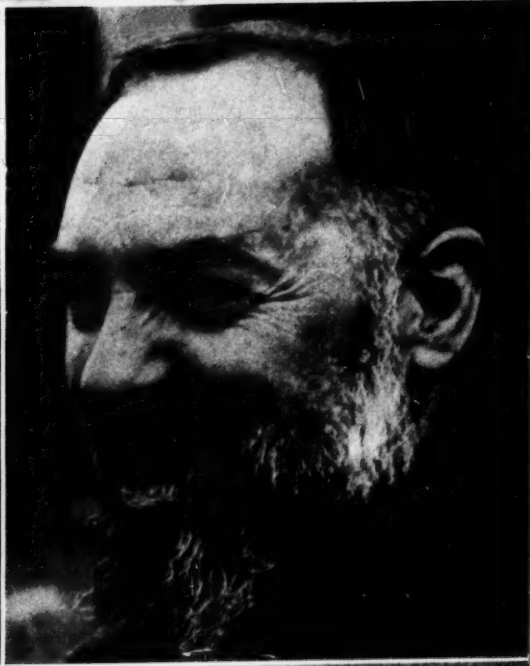
Bignami offered three possible explanations: the wounds were deliberately self-inflicted: they were due to a morbid, neurotic condition: or to a combination of both. He himself rejected the first (and therefore half the third) solution, because there was no proof

or even hint of Padre Pio's having engineered his own stigmata, and favoured the second, though, as was soon pointed out, he loyally declared that after meticulous examination he could find no trace of neurosis of any kind in his patient. The late Dr. G. Festa of Rome (died 24th September, 1940) was asked to visit Padre Pio but could not do so till October, 1919. In consequence of noticing "inaccuracies" in Professor Bignami's account, he returned, taking with him Dr. Romanelli; and, owing to a fuller documentation, we see that even Fr. Thurston's account¹ has to be amplified and even corrected. Thus the scabs or pellicules on the wounds were now seen to be a crust of dried blood; when the scabs came off, the actual wounds were seen, continually bleeding, though their depth could hardly be judged owing to the extreme sensitiveness of the surrounding tissues. But the wounds were a "true and proper lesion of the *continuum*, going deep as though produced by a pointed instrument": there was no swelling or inflammation round about. On a later visit in 1925, which was followed by about a dozen more, Dr. Festa found that the wound in the side *was* superficial and yet bled more copiously than the others. Thus one evening he removed the blood-soaked cloth from the Friar's side and replaced it with a clean one. Next morning this, and another which Padre Pio had placed on the top of the first one, were found no less soaked with blood. It is thought that so great and recurrent a loss of blood should endanger life itself. (Haemophilia has been suggested, but uselessly: other wounds, e.g. after a grave operation for hernia, heal up quickly and well.) Anyhow, the present countless photographs of the poor priest leave no doubt about the copious flow of blood and are sometimes (to my unregenerate feeling) quite ghastly, in singular contrast with the serenity, sweetness, spirituality and in short *beauty* of the Friar's face.² Dr. Festa, taking into full account the immense progress made in the study of hysteria—pithiatism, suggestibility—made since the 1914–1918 war, agrees with what I am told is now the accepted opinion: "Suggestion," applied under hypnosis or otherwise, has never yet produced permanent localized lesions like Padre Pio's

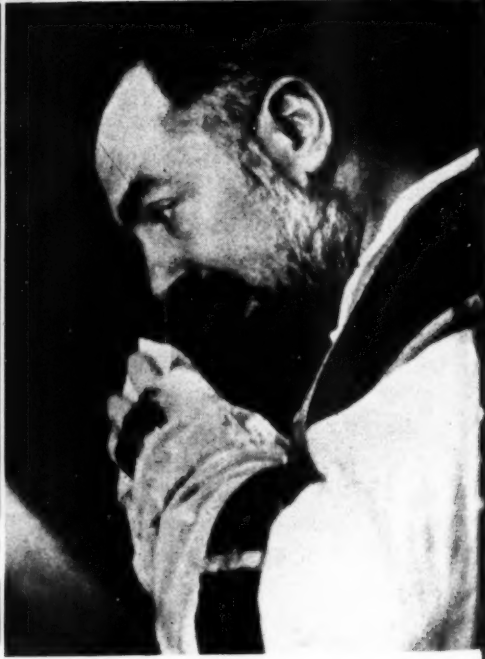
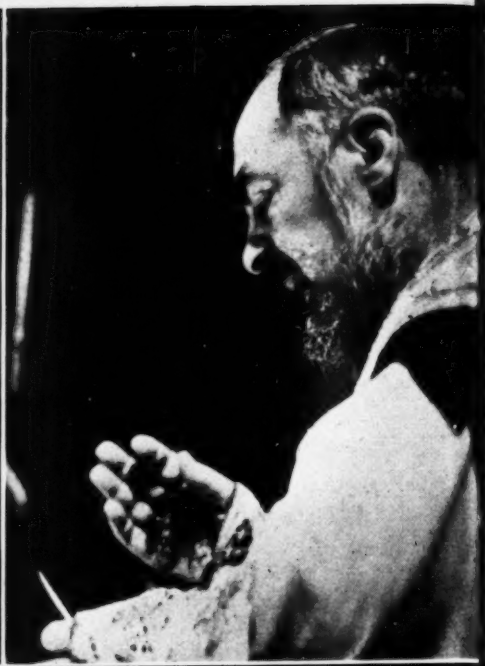
¹ THE MONTH, Vol. CXLII (1923), p. 97.

² I hasten to say that he is not at all mystically picturesque! He is sturdily built: his strong short beard has turned grey; his talk has all the true Italian gaiety and caustic kindliness; he never "talks pietism."

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in a healthy subject; and to say that the apparition of such stigmata suffices to prove that the subject is hysterical, simply begs the question. But we must differ from him in two points. First, canonization does not mean that the Church decides that all the abnormal experiences of a Saint were supernatural in origin; in fact, not seldom the Holy See when canonizing a Saint has said that it abstains from qualifying such experiences. And secondly, it is not impossible that a Saint should suffer from neuroses: indeed, it may be precisely by coping with some such disabilities that the sufferer wins through to sanctity.¹

So far as I can judge, ecclesiastical severity was held in check by the admiration felt for Padre Pio by Pope Benedict XV, who said, for example, to Mgr. Damiani, vicar-general of Salto (Uruguay): "Padre Pio is in truth an extraordinary man, of those whom God sends from time to time to earth to convert mankind." This was said in 1921 and was confirmed by the Bishop of Salto in 1925. But in October, 1924, in a number of *Vita e Pensiero* produced in honour of the seventh centenary of St. Francis's stigmata, Fr. A. Gemelli, the Franciscan Rector of the Catholic University of Milan, wrote that many, if not all, cases of stigmatism save those of St. Francis and St. Catherine of Siena might reasonably be supposed to have a natural origin, and in conversation with Dr. Festa he included Padre Pio's (whom he never examined) as perhaps due to a psychopathic state or even self-inflicted. The Jesuit *Civiltà Cattolica* (January 1925) said that this view was "inexact and imprudent," and proposed to follow the matter up. But apparently the topic was dropped on both sides though an adverse feeling had been created in Rome; and (we are told) this held up for some time the Cause of St. Gemma Galgani. Now Dr. Festa's book had been ready at least in 1930. In 1932 he showed it to Cardinal Gasparri, who gently advised that it should not be published yet, but agreed that his own copy should be sent to Fr. Gemelli. Six months later he asked Dr. Festa if the book had been acknowledged. "No." "Nor has he written to me—so, publish!" Meanwhile, in 1923, the Holy Office had said² that the phenomena

¹ This has often been discussed in e.g. *Études Carmélitaines*. I do not feel sure that Dr. Festa studied these; on the other hand, he attached too much importance to writers like the late Dr. Imbert-Gourbeyre and to ecstasies of no great credibility.

² *Acta S. Sedis*, 5th July, 1923.

connected with Padre Pio could not be affirmed with certainty (*non constare*) to be supernatural; and in 1926 and again in 1931 declared that certain books written about him were forbidden *ipso facto* and that the faithful must not visit or correspond with him. He himself was allowed to say Mass, but not in public; he could not hear confessions or preach. The Holy Office also sent in 1925 an "extraordinary commissary" to San Giovanni, and caused him to be elected superior of all the Capuchin convents in the province of Foggia. But this priest, like a new Balaam, soon became a defender of Padre Pio's "virtues and great prerogatives."¹ I do not know whether the veto upon his activities was explicitly revoked: he still may not preach, and his confrères have had even recently to curb the legend that is growing up about his alleged prophecies.

As for secondary phenomena, such as radiant light, or especially bilocation (an inexact word: even if he was seen at a distance, it does not follow that he was physically there *and* in his convent), it were possible to fill these pages with instances, but not to discuss them. I cannot but think (with Fr. Thurston) that many are well-proven. Still, I mention the scent (indescribable even when called a mixture of violets and roses) which seems to emanate from the Friar. Dr. Romanelli, who had not heard of this, thought on his first visit that it was shocking that a friar should use scents, and when Dr. Festa brought back in his car a cloth soaked with Padre Pio's blood, his companions, despite the rush of air, asked what the pervasive scent could possibly be. Later he tried (with the ruthlessness proper, if I may say so, to a Roman) to discover by every chentical experiment what it could be, but always failed. I agree that I am incompetent to form an opinion about this; but also say that I cannot suppose that an expression like "odour of sanctity", to say nothing of the less common "reek of sin," will have come into such general usage without some starting-point. (I hold that the *nucleus* of practically

¹ Argentieri's book relates this episode with great bitterness and almost undisguisedly ascribes the trials of Padre Pio to the trust placed by the Lombard Pope (Pius XI) in the very learned Milanese rector Fr. Gemelli. This seems to me a biased view, though that Pope undoubtedly was reluctant to admit, hastily, the preternatural. I find only one gentle lament in a letter of Padre Pio's about this restriction of his liberty of action, and the lack of moral support on the part of those who held for him the place of God. His obedience has always been perfect.

universal traditions, such as the historicity of a martyrdom, is almost always a concrete fact, provided we are not given some even more definite evidence which rebuts it.) As for his apostolate, it must be enough to write that not only by hearsay but owing to photos of the score of enormous motor-buses conveying pilgrims from Australia, the U.S.A., almost everywhere (I have to acknowledge save England) we have proof of what a magnetic centre he has become. Should I say that he spends nine to twelve or even more hours a day in his confessional, I should but have begun. Nothing is at first more disconcerting than his *roughness* in the confessional, if he thinks that the confession is not genuine. I cannot dwell upon this side of this most matter-of-fact, genial man. All medical records stress his amazing vitality coupled with a physique at no time robust. He receives 5-600 letters a day.

Of course what will astound the practical-minded person, and especially anyone who may think that so spiritual a man as Padre Pio might be expected to disregard mere hygiene, is the creation of a vast hospital just above the friary—the Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza. (I hope it is not “worldly” to quote: “Non ignara malis miseris succurrere disco”!) Padre Pio had always (I think) been aware that in all his vast region, if not in all southern Italy, there was no adequate hospital. The Franciscans were laboriously trying, in their poverty, to create one. The creation of a vast hospital was decided on on 9th January, 1940, but the war broke out and dashed all hopes of anything being immediately begun. All the same, but for the “invaders,” especially the Americans, could the plan ever be realized? Anyhow, the design was legally approved on 5th October, 1946, which was also the death-day of Padre Pio’s father. In May, 1947, building actually began: a hundred touching incidents could be related. Thus a very poor Italian working-man, living in America, Mario Gambino, heard the widow of Fiorello La Guardia (late mayor of New York) speaking on the radio about the hospital. He presented himself to the director of the New York Hunter College, where he worked, and, of his poverty, offered him five dollars (“for my brothers who suffer more than I”) and begged that they might be sent to Italy. The administrative council of the Casa was so moved by this that it instituted a “Mario Gambino Fund”; and on hearing of this, the generous man collected ten more dollars which he sent in the name of his ten

sons. A letter received by me in April 1952, tells how, up to date, some £350,000 sterling have been received, of which £140,000 came from UNRRA; the balance being given by about 100,000 persons from all over the world. I have shown photographs of its various installations to doctors who were in admiration of its extremely up-to-date arrangements (e.g. there is a special section for infantile paralysis; also, a fund for the very poor who cannot offer anything. The *best* is given to *all*.) To end on a different note. Out of sheer mercy to the Friar, it has been ordered that his stigmata should not be examined without a special permission from Rome. Cardinal Faulhaber told how a distinguished Chicago doctor had travelled all the way to San Giovanni but had not known that leave for an examination was necessary. Padre Pio had gently but firmly to send him away. He returned more edified by the Friar's obedience than by the sight of any wounds. In short, what those who can make no such visit can trust to, is his intercession. He has with simplicity acknowledged that if God wishes to grant a prayer, He shows him persons whom he does not know and has not heard of, and his prayers are granted. And, if his request would have to be refused, he forgets even those he meant to pray for. This perfectly corresponds with the experience of St. John of the Cross. So we will not hesitate to hope that God may thus make use of him for ourselves and our country and the world. Prayer, we feel, is ever more closely associated with practice in all that concerns the Hospital that has arisen so splendidly above the humble little friary. All over Italy "Prayer-Groups" have formed themselves: there are at present some three hundred of these, and more come into existence day by day. There is a minimum of regulation: people arrive for prayer whenever it best suits them and their parish priest or his assistant: the meetings occur in the morning, or the evening, on a Sunday or a Friday or other day; there may be Mass, or Benediction, or the Rosary may be recited—all is as informal as possible, though we understand that Padre Pio has written some very informal directives. The "intentions" of Padre Pio form the object of the prayers, and in this way the Friar spreads out the answers to his own prayers so that neither he nor anyone else can attribute the response to any save to God. These groups are being formed also in America and Australia, and we know that efforts are being made to form

them also in Ireland (and in due course, doubtless, all over the world). Another excellent system is the institution of "vocational days"—days during which members of an identical vocation devote themselves to doing what they can for the Hospital, by prayer, by collecting alms, by making it known. There is one "day" each month. Already in working-order are Mothers' Day, Doctors', Agriculturists', Families', Industrialists', Employees' and Artists' Days: in process of arrangement are Teachers', Seamen's, Working-men's, Youth, Soldiers', Commercialists' and "Professional men's" Days. That this system is so much as possible, and being realized all over Italy, shows how much Faith is alive there. We have our vocational Guilds; but I fear that they all too often languish, and in many cities, even, do not operate at all.

It is hoped to reprint this article and sell it at San Giovanni for what the purchaser is willing to offer; the proceeds would go to the hospital. Thus we English—and English readers go in ever increasing numbers to San Giovanni—will have *preliminary* information, in their own language, about the man and the movement: it is also hoped to expand the article into a book suited to English readers in any part of the world.

~ CHURCH AND STATE

The Report of an Anglican Commission

By

MAURICE BÉVENOT

APPOINTED IN 1949, this Commission published its Report last January. It was to have been discussed in the Church Assembly on the 13th February, but the tragic death of His late Majesty has meant its postponement, the Assembly adjourning as soon as it had expressed its sorrow and its sympathy with the Royal Family. This means that one cannot gauge the reactions of the Assembly to the work of their Commission, and one must bear in mind that "this Report has only the authority of the Commission by which it was prepared." For all that, few would question its genuine Anglican character, and its subject matter is one of general interest.

The Commission's terms of reference were (in substance): given the value of "the 'Establishment' as an expression of the nation's recognition of religion,"—"to draw up resolutions on changes desirable in the present relationship between Church and State" in view of certain present impediments to "the fulfilment of the responsibilities of the Church as a spiritual society."

The Introduction (pp. 3-18) discusses the meaning of "establishment" and gives the grounds for rejecting disestablishment as a solution of the present problems. It illustrates the general method of approach adopted by the Report, and calls for a few words of comment. Its persuasiveness depends in great part on the attempt made to deal fairly with the other side, and that is certainly the impression created at first reading. Yet it may be doubted whether, in fact, the case of the Free Churches against Establishment has been treated fairly. That case is stated very strongly, and Dr. Aubrey, of the Baptist Union, is liberally quoted in illustration of their attitude (14-15). This is met partly by some general references to the way that the different religious bodies have been drawing closer together, but chiefly by confronting Dr. Aubrey's witness with that of Mr. Bernard Lord Manning, a

Calvinistic Congregationalist, "who testified that it is not 'establishment' or 'disestablishment' that makes the difference between the Free Churches and the Anglican Communion to-day" (16-17). This has the appearance of the prefect's unanswerable handling of two quarrelsome boys, as he knocks their heads together and sends them packing. But in this case they were not quarrelling at all. Mr. Manning's case against the establishment of the Church of England is in agreement with Dr. Aubrey's in all essentials. If he ends his testimony with the words quoted, it is because he hates episcopalianism still more, and recognizes that "Parliamentary control, like lay patronage, is, at any rate, a check on unrestrained episcopal government." Of course, if episcopalianism went, such a check would no longer be required, and the last justification for establishment would disappear. To suggest that, on the issue in question, Dr. Aubrey and Mr. Manning cancel each other out, is quite incomprehensible, especially after Mr. Manning has been explicitly quoted in support of Dr. Aubrey's general position (p. 15, and n. 24).

Perhaps it is a compliment to the Church of Rome in this country that, unlike the Free Churches, its attitude is not referred to among the "Grounds for Disquiet" in the Church of England. Yet some mention of it might have had its relevance. If the Free Churches claim that "not fifty per cent. of practising Christians to-day adhere to the Church of England," and if Church attendance is to be the measure (14), the ignoring of our packed churches could hardly have been more underlined than by allowing them to be silently included here. Why too is the Catholic Church forgotten when the alternative to "establishment" is asserted to be a "gathered Church" (15); the Catholic Church exists in this country unestablished, yet who would call it a "gathered Church" in the accepted sense? "Roman Catholics" are mentioned once (27), but only incidentally, when the situation in Scotland is under discussion. In fact, they might not exist in England at all, so far as the Report goes—unless they are glanced at when, as a crowning justification for Parliamentary control, reference is made to "a persistent fear of 'romanizing' which has deep roots in our national history" (17). But this rather looks like a somewhat unworthy evocation of old nationalist bogeys at the expense of those Anglicans whose views may merely be "more advanced" than is customary at the moment (cf. 55).

Even less understandable is the omission of all discussion of the situation in the United States of America, where there is no established Church, where in fact anti-Establishment is written into the Constitution itself. Thus the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." If the terms of reference speak of the Establishment of the Church of England as "an expression of the nation's recognition of religion," was it not worth while confronting this with the First Amendment—which does not prevent there being a considerable "recognition of religion" in the States? This lacuna is all the stranger because the Report actually refers to the notorious decisions recently made by the American Supreme Court on the subject (55); it might have been usefully filled in after consultation with the representatives of the Protestant Episcopal Church who came to the Lambeth Conference only a year before this Commission was set up.

In a general survey of the concrete proposals of the Report and of the principles on which they are based, only some of the issues involved can be dealt with. Under the first main heading, that of the *Control of Worship*, it is proposed that the problem of the Prayer Book be approached gradually; that certain deviations should be authorized experimentally over a given period, so that the Church of England can "make up its mind" before presenting a permanent revision to Parliament. As a check to dangerous "innovators," any such deviation, even as an experiment, must first secure a two-thirds majority in each of the Houses of Convocation and in the House of Laity. Great stress is laid on winning the approval of the latter (30-32).

The need for fresh action was patent ever since the twofold rejection (1927, 1928) by Parliament of the "Deposited Book," proposed as a permissible alternative to the historic Book of Common Prayer. At the time, the bishops decided not to interfere with those who did nevertheless use it—a decision regarded as "inevitable" in the situation, though the situation was one "with which it neither was nor is possible or right to rest content. . . . From the angle of the State it looks like contumacy; from the angle of the Church it looks like a weak and faintly discreditable compromise. . . ." (25). The Report now judges that the impasse

was reached because, when the Church Assembly passed the Measure, the Church of England had not really "made up its mind" about the Prayer Book, and "the degree of support for the proposed revision . . . had not the volume and vigour which would have made it wholly convincing" (30). And if it is "not the legality but the propriety of Parliament's action which [was] assailed"—by Archbishop Davidson for instance (21)—yet that action is now benignantly interpreted as "having had the legitimate purpose of delaying change until the mind of the Church was unmistakable" (24). (This interpretation will not seem far-fetched if one recalls Dr. Darwell Stone's *opposition* to the measure and his relief at its rejection.) The period of experimentation is calculated to "give a chance for Church opinion gradually to form itself" (30).

The efficacy of this proposal may well be questioned on the basis of what is said elsewhere in the Report. The fluid condition of the mind of the Church of England is illustrated when the Report contrasts it with the unity manifested by the Church of Scotland in its Declaratory Articles as incorporated in the 1921 Act. "It is more than doubtful whether today any such agreed statement could be obtained in the Church of England" (28). If this suggests incidentally how much the fact of establishment contributes to the coherence of the Church of England, it surely raises doubts whether there will ever be found a two-thirds majority in each of the three Houses in favour of any particular "deviation"—if the deviation has any significance at all. And as it is unlikely that the deviation will be "ordered"—and not merely "allowed or sanctioned" (30)—so that those originally opposed to it can abstain altogether from trying it out, it is still more doubtful whether, after the interim period, it will ever secure the fresh two-thirds majority necessary for final adoption. So that it looks as if there will be a "perpetuation of the pre-existing chaos" (24) after all. And if it does get through the three Houses, Parliament can still reject it and remain "within its legal rights" (21); so that while one can understand "any claim" thus "to override the mind of the Church" being described as "intolerable" (23), it is difficult to see how it can be called "illegitimate" (24).

Given the present trends in ecumenical discussions, and in particular the desire of many Anglicans to satisfy their Free Church brethren, it is not surprising that both here and in the

questions of the appointment of bishops and of the supreme ecclesiastical Court, the participation of the laity should be stressed (32; 46; 60-1). What is more difficult to understand is the special emphasis on the House of Laity in this matter of the Prayer Book. The present Report calls in question the assertion made by that of 1935 which "rejected any allegation that the House of Laity in the Church Assembly is unrepresentative." It admits that that House may "reflect the views of a majority among articulate Churchmen," but maintains that "the balance would be different if the inarticulate were taken into account" (22). Hence is reached the admittedly paradoxical conclusion that "it is arguable that . . . the House of Commons represents the mind of the inarticulate mass of laymen [Anglican, presumably] more closely than does the House of Laity" (23). But if that is so, if the House of Commons in 1927-8 represented to Archbishop Davidson, "had originally wanted no change"—better than did the House of Laity, why should it not do so again, and why all this anxiety to underline the great part which the House of Laity is destined to play if the proposals of the Report are accepted?

The Report is perhaps at its best in the second main heading: the *Appointment of Bishops*, at least in the way that it faces a complex situation and confines itself to what is possible in the present setting. It will not please those who clamour for a radical change, but a radical change would risk rousing opposition on a still wider scale. It brings out perhaps more clearly than ever before how, in such matters, the ultimate responsibility of the Prime Minister is compatible with adequate consultation of the Church at the highest level, and how important it is that such enquiries and recommendations should preserve their private character. Its own proposals are sober and practical, in the form of a small consultative body appointed by the Archbishops, to help them in preparing the recommendations—which remain *their* personal responsibility—to be made to the Prime Minister.

At the same time there is a certain unreality in its handling of the complaint that "the permission to elect is a farce and the result is a foregone conclusion" (36). It quotes Dr. E. W. Watson with approval: "I cannot conceive of a chapter that would fear to reject an unworthy nominee" (38); as also Archbishop Davidson: "No constitutional rule or usage can force the Arch-

bishop to the solemn act of consecration if he be prepared by resignation or otherwise to abide the consequences of declaring himself *in foro conscientiae* unable to proceed" (39). Noble words indeed; but to make out that, in the first case, with the fear of penalties hanging over the heads of the dean and chapter, "the terror on the part of the Crown's representative would be greater if election were refused" (38), and in the second, that "the possibility of such refusal [to consecrate] is a strong deterrent against any abuse of power by the secular authority" (39)—is rather paradoxical and, to say no more, a little optimistic in this changing world. And, on the latter point, we should be glad to have details of "the examples of its successful exercise in the past," which the history books do not seem to mention.

The last section of the Report deals with the *Control of Church Courts*, but, for reasons explained in the preamble, it confines itself to the crucial question of the highest court, at present constituted by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The chief and long-standing gravamen is that this final court of appeal in Church matters is entirely constituted by laymen, the episcopal assessors attached to it holding a quite subordinate position. Tersely put, "the doctrine a clergyman must profess, the ritual he must observe, the vestments he may wear and the ornaments he may use are determined by a secular tribunal" (50, quoting Bishop Blomfield, 1850).

The historical review of the creation and working of this court and the reflections on it bring out two points which deserve special mention. It was at first predominantly, and since 1876 has been exclusively, composed of learned lay judges—owing apparently to the belief that their judgments would deal only with the law and would not impinge on theology: "it was never contemplated that questions of heresy might come before the court" (51). In the event, "during the period 1850-90 . . . more cases involving doctrine and ritual came before the Judicial Committee than in the whole of the previous three hundred years" (54). But there followed a slump. "In view of the general aversion in Church circles to the authority of the Privy Council," no ecclesiastical issues of importance have come before it in the last sixty years (*id.*). So that "the present system cannot work well in practice, for it no longer works at all" (56).

But something far more important has come to the surface

from the experience of the last hundred years. It has a twofold aspect, familiar enough to Catholic traditional thought, so that it is another example of the hard school of facts eventually inculcating what are almost truisms amongst us. On the one hand, rites and ceremonies imply doctrine, and a judgment even on such matters as vestments and ornaments will often involve doctrinal issues. On the other, given certain Articles and Formularies, when judgment is passed that some new exposition of doctrine is or is not in conformity with them, it is not merely a legal decision but a doctrinal decision that is made. It almost passes belief that the court, in the Gorham judgment, should have disclaimed any "jurisdiction or authority to settle matters of faith, etc. . . ." on the ground that "its duty extended *only* to the consideration of that which is by law established to be the doctrine of the Church of England, upon the true and legal construction of its Articles and Formularies" (52). Archbishop Tait seems to have been alone clear-sighted enough (in 1873) to protest that the learned judges might fail to see the wider implications of their own decisions (53). It has now, at long last, come to be recognized that "the decisions of the court are not only automatic and declaratory; they are often in some sense legislative, for they carry principles expressed in relevant legislation to points which the legislator did not contemplate," so that they "may inadvertently impose on the Church some doctrine which its bishops and convocations have never accepted" (54-5). Development of doctrine is all very well, provided it is a spiritual, not a secular authority which controls it.

The foregoing pages have dealt only with a few aspects and details of the Report. But after a close study of the whole, some quite personal reflections may be permitted of a more general kind. The main issue at stake is simply that of disestablishment, which the Report firmly excludes, at least under present circumstances. One will agree or not according to the view-point from which one considers it. The establishment of the Church of England does, in the concrete, express "the nation's recognition of religion" (10), and it has a pervasive influence in many parts of the social and cultural activities of the country which would soon disappear—especially if disestablishment were forced upon it by Parliament. Abroad, disestablishment would be hailed, or

deplored, as the inauguration of another secularist State—though how the United States would regard it is problematical. Therefore, from the point of view of Christian influence in the life of the nation, the disappearance of the Church of England as a national institution would imply a lowering of the religious tone of the whole.

But from the point of view of the Church of England "as a spiritual society," other considerations would seem to favour a *voluntary* disestablishment. It is recognized that "the terms of any 'disestablishment' would be determined in the last resort by Parliament . . . and the chief factor in determining these would be the temper of public opinion at the time as reflected in Parliament" (8). In another connection the question is raised of the possibility of a Government or a House of Commons being "indifferent or quite unsympathetic. Europe is full of warning examples, and 'it can never happen here' is an unsafe principle of action" (32). The reply given to this may be diplomatic, but it sounds rather weak and improvident: "we are unwilling, and we think it unnecessary, to do more than to refer to any such contingency. Such a degree of Parliamentary intransigence . . . is highly improbable" (33).

But what if, after all, "it *should* happen here"? Reference has already been made to the Church of England's comprehensiveness being only maintained by the national fact of establishment. What if some vigorous political party should develop which made a dead set against it either by forceful disestablishment or, worse still, by harnessing all it could of its machinery and influence in the service of its own ideology. In either case, it would find enough fifth columnists and nominal Anglicans—it does not need so many—to promote its non-religious (in fact, anti-religious) purposes. If a religious body is to survive at all under such circumstances, or at least go down with the flag flying, it must have *internal* unity, and not depend for its unity on the precarious goodwill of a largely non-religious electorate. But such internal unity and strength can only be discovered by sacrificing the external props which support it to-day. Common prudence would seem to advise: "Get out while the going's good. It is good enough now, and it does not look as if it is likely to improve. You will lose in numbers, as well as in endowments and influence, but you will not lose catastrophically, as you certainly will if

disestablishment is forced upon you. And you will have a far better chance of shaping a unity that can stand up to external violence and insidious pressure than, say, by making a 'common front' with those who in fundamentals disagree with you."

But if we try to follow out this fancy to the end, we shall have to recognize the nature of the problem which it sets. If the Church of England is to keep her traditional ethos, substitutes will have to be found for at least three elements which have hitherto formed the background of all her activities. Primary is the need of some control "to prevent each successive school of thought in the Church first from being itself extinguished and later from dominating the others" (17), also "to retard, and upon occasion to frustrate, the designs of particular generations of clergy towards alterations which [are] in advance of the general body of opinion" (24) and, in fine, to curb the impulse of "an ecclesiastical majority to pass new legislation against the wishes of a substantial minority" (29). This function is at present admittedly exercised by Parliament, and a substitute will be hard to come by. Of course, in the Catholic Church, a control substantially analogous to this is exercised by the Papacy, and if the Report can to-day express its confidence that Parliament will "consistently refrain from exercising its full legal powers out of respect for the fitness of things" (33), we, too, can trust the Pope not to go too far, perhaps with better justification.

The second element for which a substitute must be found is the Prime Minister's ultimate responsibility for the appointment of bishops. The Report is, not unnaturally, averse to the idea of *elections*. "The experience of the Church elsewhere in such elections has not been a uniformly happy one" (44). Election, at best, "is liable to produce unobjectionable but uninspiring appointments" (42). Hence the insistence that, even where it is only a question of advising the Prime Minister, the ultimate responsibility on the Church's side should remain personally with the Archbishops, and that those appointed to assist them should have only a consultative function. However, the final decision would be as at present, the Prime Minister's responsibility, so that it would still be open to Churchmen to put the blame for unfortunate appointments *outside* their ranks, clerical or lay. If the final decision (remaining a personal one) were now to become an archiepiscopal one instead, what a new importance

would attach to Canterbury and York! And what dangers might threaten the union of the two Provinces! The "outside" responsibility, irksome as it is, has its points. Once again, in the Roman Church, the final responsibility for the appointment of bishops lies outside the particular Province concerned. Like the Prime Minister, the Pope too "makes his own enquiries and . . . has at his disposal for this purpose an exceptionally well-informed secretariat" (41).

A similar problem is presented by the final Court of Appeal in spiritual matters. For besides the question whether the decisions of Church courts would be recognized at Law, the responsibility of such a Church-appointed body would be of quite a different order from that of the present Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and even from that of the "Final Court" projected in the Report. For, even in the latter case, the "two communicant members of the Church of England who hold or have held high judicial office" would be "nominated . . . by the Lord Chancellor" (61), with all the weight of the Law and of the country behind him. That would have to go, as also, presumably, the sense that behind the judgments of that court there lay the power of the Crown. This lack of something *beyond* the highest Church Court of the land would be the biggest change of all in the outlook of the Church of England. The need for something of the kind is a genuine inheritance from the Middle Ages, and it is hard to see what can be created to meet it. In those far off days, "appeals from [the ecclesiastical courts] lay finally to the Pope. All such appeals were transferred from the Pope to the Crown . . . by Henry VIII" (50). Even the Pope's most loyal sons recognize that appeal to Rome can seem to have its drawbacks; but it, too, also has its points.

But such reflections are perhaps only academic. They are in any case based mainly on the phraseology of a Report, which has not as yet been officially received, and the Church of England's voluntary adoption of a course which presented such distasteful dilemmas is highly improbable.

ST. THOMAS MORE'S CLOCK

ST. THOMAS MORE and Charles Waterton the naturalist, separated by over two centuries, are widely different figures in the field of English literature, but they are linked by a clock which each owned in his lifetime, and which has survived to the present day.

The clock makes its first appearance in the study in Indian ink by Hans Holbein of the More family group. This study was probably made in 1527, soon after the painter's arrival in England, and More was then living in the house he built at Chelsea. The study is almost too well known to need description. St. Thomas More, wearing his furred gown and collar of SS, is sitting placidly in the centre, as though the hidden hair-shirt were the height of luxury. There is a faint smile in the line of his mouth, "for he had a speciall guift in merrie and pleasant talke," which is absent in the portrait now in New York. On his right is seated his father, Sir John More, and sitting and standing around them are the other members of the household, Dame Alice, his second wife, his son John, with his betrothed, Anne Cresacre; the three studious married daughters with their books, Margaret, Elizabeth, and Cecily; Margaret Gigs, who married John Clement, and Henry Patenson the fool, standing four-square in a stance reminiscent of Henry VIII. The clock, almost touching the ceiling, hangs in the background. Holbein had a memory of almost photographic retentiveness, and he shows just sufficient detail in the lineaments of the clock to fix it in the composition. Doubtless it would have been shown in the lost painting with the same minute and careful finish as the accessories in the portrait of George Gisze, for instance.

The clock reappears in the two large paintings, based on the ink study, which were made later for descendants of St. Thomas More. One of these groups is at Nostell Priory, Yorkshire, and shows minor alterations and additions. The other, at one time at Burford Priory, and now in the National Portrait Gallery, London, where it covers the entire wall at the end of a gallery, shows a more radical rearrangement. The daughters are grouped together, and some figures are omitted, including Dame Alice and Patenson. (A colloquy between Dame Alice and Harry the *famulus* on their omission would be, one imagines, as entertaining as anything in Erasmus.) Four new figures are introduced: Thomas More II, the recusant and grandson of St. Thomas, Maria his wife, and their eldest and youngest sons, John More III and Cresacre More. Anne Cresacre, in later life, is shown in a portrait on the wall. (John More II died in 1547, and she married George West in 1559, but was again a widow in 1572.) Professor R. W. Chambers, ignoring the later Anne, comments, "The painting is therefore a composite group of five generations,

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The
House Clock
of
Sir Thomas More
which came to the Watertons
with Anne More daughter of
Christopher Cresacre More
of Barnbrough and wife of
Charles Waterton
my great Grandfather
The Testor
E. N. Waterton

seven in Early Tudor, and four in Later Tudor costume. The newcomers are dated 1593." For convenience these paintings will be referred to as the Nostell and Burford groups.

But the clock is not the same. It is narrower in both paintings, and appears to be in a case with the glass door open. The dial is smaller in relation to the whole, and above the dial is a device which would seem to indicate the phases of the moon. The hour-hand has a pointing finger. Although superficially alike, a scrutiny of the Nostell and Burford clocks shows that the Nostell representation has a more plentiful sprinkling of stars about the crescent moon. But time marches on: the single hand of the clock points to 10.30 in the Nostell group, and to 11.30 in the Burford group.

Cresacre More, who wrote a life of his great-grandfather, was the youngest of thirteen children, and he lived to inherit the family estates, and the clock, in 1606. Of Cresacre's two surviving elder brothers, Thomas III became a priest and, probably, Henry also. In the same year that Anne married George West, her daughter, Anne II, married the widower's son, John West. The Wests were of Barnborough, Yorkshire, and on the death of George West, Anne made over the Cresacre property to Thomas More II.¹

At this point the personal element must enter the narrative to describe one of those happy linkages occasionally uncovered by the student. The lover of More is familiar with his portraits, with *Utopia*, *A Dialogue of Comfort*, and the rest, and knows well the stormy weather of the closing years, but his knowledge of the descendants is apt to be vague. What has Charles Waterton, the lovable and exuberant, the rough-rider of a savage cayman lashing the water into fury, who thrust his fist wrapped in his hat down the throat of a snake, to do with this? There were too many gaps in the jigsaw: the biographers of More do not mention the clock, and the biographers of Waterton do not mention Holbein.

Then the pieces fell into place. Walter de la Mare in a delightful essay on Naturalists in his *Pleasures and Speculations*, writing of Waterton, quotes his way of life from his biographer, and the full passage is not unworthy to be set beside Anthony Ashley Cooper's character of Henry Hastings.

His way of life (and he lived to be 83) was primitive. He got up at three, lit his fire, and lay down upon the floor again for half an hour, which he called a half hour of luxury. He had shaved and dressed by four, and from four to five he was upon his knees in the chapel. On his return to his room, he read a chapter in a Spanish

¹ For this information I am indebted to Prof. A. W. Reed, in Appendix II, *The Life of Syr Thomas More*, by Ro: Ba: (Oxford, 1950).

life of Saint Francis Xavier, which concluded his early devotions, and he began the secular work of the day with a chapter of Don Quixote in the original. He next wrote letters, or carried on bird-stuffing, till *Sir Thomas More's clock struck eight*, when, punctual to the moment, the household at Walton sat down to breakfast. His was frugal, and usually consisted of dry toast, watercress, and a cup of weak tea. Breakfast ended, he went out till noon, superintending his farm, mending fences, or clipping hedges. If the weather was cold he would light a fire in the fields. From noon to dinner, which was at half-past one, he would sit indoors and read or think . . .

So the clock was in Yorkshire in the nineteenth century.

Where was the clock now? Would it go to America like the superb portrait? I made a few enquiries, and was informed by Mr. F. E. Whitaker, of Nostell, that the clock had recently been on show at an exhibition of Waterton relics in a museum at Wakefield, and that it was in the possession of Mrs. Yvonne Waterton, whose husband, Edmund Waterton, was the great-grandson of Charles Waterton.

When I saw the clock I did not make a detailed examination of it as the light was rather bad, but by reaching as high as I could with the tape-measure I found its height to be about sixteen inches. The diameter of the dial, which projects slightly beyond each side, is six and one-quarter inches, and round the bottom is inscribed *Joseph Shepard Fecit*. The length of the pendulum rod from where it emerges to the bottom, is thirty-five inches. The chains for the weights extend to the floor, and explain the height of the clock, which is hung to a wooden mounting board. On the board, below the clock, is a brass plate ($3\frac{3}{4}$ " by $4\frac{1}{2}$ ") inscribed:—

The
House Clock
-of
Sir Thomas More
which came to the Watertons
with Anne More, daughter of
Christopher Cresacre More
of Barnbrough, and wife of
Charles Waterton
my great Grandfather
The Testor

E. M. Waterton.

The photograph of the clock was made 425 years after it was limned by Holbein, and, together with the photograph of the inscription, was taken by kind permission of Mrs. Waterton.

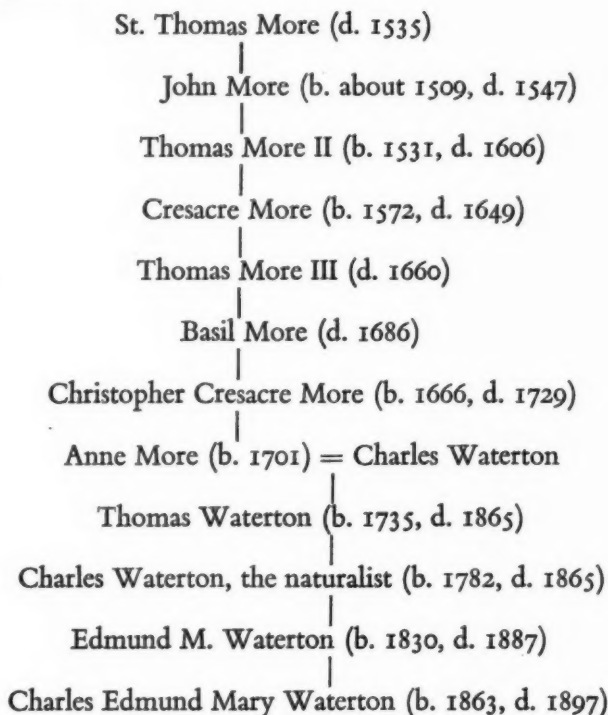
The clock was not going when I saw it, but Mrs. Waterton said

that although it was in going order it had been upset by the return journey from Wakefield. I did not hear it strike, but I understand that it has a loud and penetrating note.

As regards the pendulum (an invention of the seventeenth century) it should be noted that neither the study nor the paintings show one; and I am assured by someone with knowledge of the mechanism of clocks, that the clock was probably originally controlled by some form of verge escapement, which was subsequently replaced by a pendulum control, the latter giving greater accuracy in time-keeping. I have been unable to find out anything about Joseph Shepard.

Comparing the clock in the photograph with the representations of it in the sketch and the Burford and Nostell groups, it appears to approximate more closely to the sketch than to the others, and it is worth noting that there is a dark shadow in the Burford picture which may be over-painting.

The existence of St. Thomas More's clock is not known generally, and since St. Thomas More's death it has passed through the hands of twelve generations.



On the death of Charles Edmund Mary Waterton, the clock passed in turn to each of his three sons; first to Joseph, who was killed as a

despatch-rider in 1915, then to Charles, who died in 1934, and finally to Edmund Waterton, who died in 1948.

The *Illustrated London News* in an account of the Waterton family published after the death of the Squire in 1865, mentions that he was ninth in descent from St. Thomas More. In his time, as already stated, the clock stood at the head of the stairs at Walton Hall, outside his room, and it was backed by a large panel of coulacanara snake-skin.

The coulacanara is almost certainly *Boa imperator*, and Waterton accounted for at least two in South America. The clock has no minute-hand, and the naturalist said that when it was made three hundred years before minute-hands were not wanted; people had not then to rush to catch express trains. Minute-hands were brought into use by high-pressure engines and high-pressure living. The clock struck the hours so clearly that when the windows were open it could be heard on the edge of the lake at Walton Hall.

Waterton grew to manhood in the time of Jorrock's jaunts and jollities; of high-spirited country squires with an enthusiasm for field sports. Squire Mytton ran through his thousands, played his pranks, and drank himself to beggary and death. Squire Waterton was made of finer clay, and, although quite as capable as his contemporary of setting his nightshirt on fire to cure an attack of hiccoughs, or riding a bear in his drawing room, preferred to entertain the inmates of a neighbouring mental home to a dinner-party and conversazione in his grounds; and in his seventy-seventh year astonished a visitor by scratching the back of his head with the great toe of his right foot. He did not squander his patrimony, and lived to extreme old age, his biographer says, without having wasted an hour or a shilling. With his great love for birds, but with a detestation of the "Hanoverian" rat, he passed his days building Jerusalem at Walton Hall.

So the clock, with its many associations, has come down to us. It was seen by Sir John More, and seen or heard by all the people great and small who came to the house at Chelsea. Margaret Roper saw it often; and St. Thomas himself may have glanced at it as he went to his boat, where William Roper and the four servants were waiting for the sad journey to the lords at Lambeth.

Ireland has St. Patrick's bell, and it was struck at the Mass attended by a million people in the Phoenix Park in 1932. England has St. Thomas More's clock, and, perhaps, it may strike over the wireless one day to his countrymen. Or is that too fond a fancy?

THOMAS RAWORTH

REVIEWS

THE YOUNG VICTORIA

The Youthful Queen Victoria, by Dormer Creston (Macmillan 30s).

MISS DORMER CRESTON is to be congratulated on having accomplished, one imagines, precisely what she intended in her "discursive narrative." She describes with great vividness the general social background, the clothes, the furniture, and above all the extraordinary people who surrounded the young Victoria. There are sharply drawn pictures of those most peculiar men, her uncles; of the problems and character of her mother; of Victoria's affection for Lord Melbourne and her courtship and surrender to Albert. Miss Creston does not aim at giving a balanced history; the "Ladies of the Bedchamber" crisis and Peel's apparent defeat by the young Queen are treated as personal rather than national affairs. But, of course, that was how Victoria herself did regard them.

The whole narrative is rather highly coloured, but Miss Creston has good authority for every point she makes. The book has all the verve of a novel, and is far more amusing than most. Take, for example, this passage on p. 293 from a description of life at Windsor in the summer of 1837.

During these evenings the Duchess of Kent would be seated somewhere in the room at a card-table, and deadly indeed it must have been for those sharing her rubbers of whist ("a horrible player she is," groaned Creevey); for the chief object of the game was not pleasure, but to keep the Duchess from falling asleep. The victims chosen for this boring occupation would be brightly picked out by Victoria, herself extremely wide awake.

But sometimes the style deteriorates; and though the story of the famous night on which Victoria learned that she was at last Queen is very well handled, it is in these words that it is introduced:

From within its cocoon of sleep Victoria's mind came floating up to awareness.

The serious historian, while admiring the great industry which lies behind the narrative, may regret the intensely personal and therefore somewhat distorted picture that is drawn. Even to him, however, Miss Creston's book is valuable, for it is based on genuine material drawn from a wide range of memoirs, and it helps to explain the character of the woman who wielded so great an influence and exerted so great a fascination over her own and later generations. The main appeal of the book will be, however, to the general reader, and it may be expected that it will be a very great success. There are thirty plates, well chosen and reproduced, and the print and production are excellent.

M. D. R. LEYS

CAPTAIN CYRIL STRAUSS

A Soldier Looks Back: The Journals of Cyril Anthony Strauss, edited with an Introduction by Derek Patmore (Falcon Press 21s).

THIS IS FAR too good a book to be missed, because (despite some suppressions and compressions which the editor felt bound to make) it consists of genuine diaries, written in strange places and moments and "without bothering," says the author, "too much about accuracy of dates and the spelling of names;" and indeed these oddities have been respected—thus in "Pythognor" we must detect (I think) Pythagoras; "Thencidide" for Thucydides may be due to Strauss's "nervous" script—for he knew how to spell the name and was devoted to that author; "Litostralos" and "Lilostralos" occur on consecutive pages for Lithostrotos.

In February 1941 he wrote in Kenya: "It is a land of surpassing and astonishing beauty, [full of] good-natured, satisfied natives and settlers . . . a cheerful, healthy, crazy gang," and "of one thing I can write with certainty, having just come from England, in this vile war you could not be in a more blessed or less effected [affected? infected?] spot," but in April (true, from hospital): "My one object is to leave this wretched country and get to . . . the Mediterranean." And after three and a half years' service in Africa and the Middle East: "Africa isn't worth a brass button. Africa has no future; and above all Africa has no romance except for a casual visitor with money to spend and a European home to return to." "There is more character and humanity to be found in one street of any provincial town in England than in the whole of the Middle East, where the townspeople are uncultured, almost 90 per cent of the country people are starving, and the ministers exhausted by intrigue." We can well imagine that the unexpurgated journals were full of "personal judgments of friends and people and mordant comments," so that "the fact that we have the private journals and not his revised version undoubtedly makes a far more interesting book, for discretion would have probably compelled Cyril to suppress many of the most absorbing passages." Yes; but *we* have not got those journals in their totality, and the editor himself, rightly, does suppress many such passages! But even so, the book remains tingling with vitality and sharp enough of tooth. And its very inconsistencies and manifest immaturities suffice to make the book both informative and delightful. Strauss is detached but not dispassionate. It was largely because Strauss, having come from an opulent "horse-minded" high-spirited family, himself vividly individualist, artistic, and appreciative of Plato, Aristotle, Shelley and Ibsen, was too much of an "aristocrat" as not to throw himself wholly into his duty as a soldier, or to find it hard to be on friendly yet never

condescending terms with men of whatever military rank, or with Natives—not that his critical sense was for one moment blunted. We wish that he had read the books of A. de St.-Exupéry and of Ernest Psichari—for two reasons. First, they might have helped him to see even more ghastliness and mystery than he did in the desert, where he experienced things horrible and sublime; and secondly, because both had had a Catholic background—I do not forget that Psichari was Renan's grandson, and that St.-Exupéry did not fully regain his ancestral faith—and Strauss might have been saved much fumbling in his search into the Nature of God, or the mysteries of creation and of "wrong," which makes the first few pages of this book rather heavy going: but he at least aimed at reading one whole book of the Old Testament a day and caught glimpses (if no more) of the Sermon on the Mount and of the "cushionless," indeed explosive character and career of St. Paul. A book with much bitter and joyous realism, but with no dirt, in it. Towards the end of 1944 he was in Italy, writing the history of the K.R.R.C.; he could have got leave, but his mother, a paramount influence in his life, most unselfishly telegraphed to him to stay and finish his work: in December he was killed in an accident (about which we are told nothing), aged thirty-one; he was buried at Assisi. The gay "gonfalonier of God" will have escorted this enquiring soul, assuredly, to its goal, having shown him more about the meaning and value of suffering, and, above all, about Christ.

C. C. MARTINDALE

A STUDY IN CREDULITY

The Social History of Art, by Arnold Hauser (Routledge and Kegan Paul, two volumes 42s).

SOME four years ago Messrs. Kegan Paul published a valuable and stimulating book entitled *Florentine Painting and its Social Background*. Its author, Dr. Frederick Antal, propounded not a few interpretations of the evidence that are a trifle hasty, and his own explanation of what he was setting out to do contained a touch of naïveté. Art history, he argued, done from a study of styles and from a formal point of view, explains nothing; we touch on explanation only when we have penetrated beyond the formal and have reached something deeper, the conception of life, the philosophy of the day, the outlook expressed through the medium of the artist. But there are divergencies in people's outlook on life; the public is not a homogeneous body but is split up into various, often antagonistic, sections. To understand the art, then, we need to understand the structure of society, and to this end "we must ascertain the economic and social

causes which have produced these divisions. This should be our first concern, for here alone have we solid ground under our feet."

That here alone we have solid ground under our feet is a simple faith. But Dr. Antal is a careful scholar, and his book is richly rewarding. Dr. Arnold Hauser shares this same simple faith, but unfortunately his standard of scholarship appears to be low. In consequence, promising though it seems at first sight, his book is unrewarding and, of its nature, altogether dreary.

I must explain what I mean by some random but characteristic samples.

Writing of the Greek archaic style and the courtly art of the Tyrants, Dr. Hauser notes that there is no representation of the female nude, and characteristically remarks that "the aristocracy disliked representations of the nude which is 'democratic like death.'" There may, perhaps, be some sense of the word "democratic" in which this assertion is true. But even if it is true and even if the aristocracy thought it true, Dr. Hauser cannot possibly know whether they did or not, or whether their thinking it had any connection with contemporary sculpture. There is simply no evidence on this point.

However, art history in this mode is a game you play with high abstractions and multitudes of "-isms"; verification, or even verifiability, does not much matter. One longs for a dash of empiricism; one longs, too, for Dr. Hauser to have some understanding of the distinction between descriptive and emotive language. For a deficiency in verification is amply compensated for by a supercharge of emotive words. Of the Sophists he writes that "they are the discoverers of historical relativity—the recognition that scientific truths, ethical standards and religious creeds are all historically conditioned. . . . They discover the relativity of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, good and evil. They recognize the pragmatic motives underlying human valuations, and thus pave the way for all subsequent endeavour in the field of humanistic enlightenment." Another term for emotive language is propaganda.

Naturally, Dr. Hauser has little understanding of Plato, and here again his *apriorismus* dictates the story that he tells. "Any idealism that separates the world of timeless Forms, of pure norms and absolute values from the world of experience and practice signifies something of a retreat from life into pure contemplation and as such involves giving up the attempt to alter reality." Clearly Dr. Hauser has never pondered the concept of the *metrion* that Plato makes use of in the *Politicus* and elsewhere, nor does he appear to know that Plato's ideal of contemplation (unlike Aristotle's) has a practical orientation—it is directed to the life of government and of "altering reality."

Jump twenty-two or more centuries, and Dr. Hauser has the

Impressionists as neatly taped. "Impressionism is an urban art . . . because it sees the world through the eyes of the townsman and reacts to external impressions with the overstrained nerves of modern technical man." Does it indeed? Is Renoir a modern technical man, and, if he is, in what sense is Dr. Hauser using words? Here, too, one longs for clues. But Impressionist work is lumped together and treated as a consistent whole. It is no such whole. "Impressionism forgoes not only plasticity but also design, not only spatial but also linear form." But only Pissarro and Monet are impressionists in this sense; Manet and Degas and the later Renoir, of course, are not. No wonder Dr. Hauser falls into muddles.

Of course, it may be said, if a man is going to write of the social history of art, and to attempt to cover most of the arts (painting, literature, some music) from the Altamira paintings to Picasso and to relate these arts to changes of contemporary attitudes and outlooks and to correlate these latter changes with social and economic changes, these being the key that unlocks all the doors, what else are we to expect? Must not such a writer take the aeroplane view and write in lofty generalities? No doubt he must, but it is doubtful whether the result can ever be something to be dignified with the name of history. As it is, Dr. Hauser exhibits Central European scholarship at its worst: facts and interpretations are jumbled as if they were one and the reader is never warned; degrees of probability are never hinted at; the inflated abstract ideas are never analysed and their cash-value demanded; the method is never questioned;¹ emotive and valuative words are used with no recognition of their nature and as if they were factual words; what is meant by "explanation" is never elucidated. In one's insularity one had thought that this sort of Marxist or near-Marxist way of writing history had died, had been killed by the thousands of qualifications that scholars have found it necessary to make. But apparently it still has its faithful practitioners.

No doubt, when a writer says all manner of things, it will turn out that some of them happen to be true, and that others of them will provoke exploration and reflection. But, in the hands of a scholar accustomed to critical methods and to reflection about the validity of his dominant ideas and his techniques, the present work might have turned out a rewarding undertaking. That it has signally failed is a great pity. For the publishers have done the almost impossible. Here are two volumes, well bound, well printed on good paper, of 1022 pages, with 145 illustrations, all for two guineas. It is an astonishing feat.

VINCENT TURNER

¹ There are, of course, other methods; cp. Otto Benesch, *The Art of the Renaissance in Northern Europe*.

SHORTER NOTICES

Return to Chesterton, by Maisie Ward (Sheed and Ward 21s).

IN THIS VOLUME Miss Ward has given her previous life of Chesterton an appendix consisting of letters and gossip and scraps of reviews. By Chesterton himself there is much verse fooling and a sprinkling of witticisms, like the reference to Shaw's *Back to Methuselah* "of which the Book of Genesis is a short summary"; and there are five important letters, three moralizing—to a Protestant about to marry a Catholic, to a girl about to enter a convent, to a girl in difficulties with her faith, and two critical—on Meredith and Omar Khayyam.

In addition Miss Ward has collected some interesting opinions which it would be enlightening to see more fully developed. Thus Mr. Christopher Dawson explains a puzzling phase: "Chesterton's youth is as remote from the present age as that of Dickens, but it has not had time to mellow and acquire its right historical perspective. I feel that Chesterton's courtship needs a learned German excursus on the *Wesen und Soziologische Grundlagen* of English suburban courtly love in the last decade of the nineteenth century."

Some of these opinions recognize that time's pendulum has swung temporarily against Chesterton. On the one hand we can still see his great excellence, that, as Mr. Graham Greene puts it, inspired by cosmic optimism, he saw what most was lacking in our age—the *un peu d'esperance* which Péguy's Creator found He could not ask of man. On the other hand there are the deficiencies we feel more keenly now as a kind of reaction from his brilliance. Thus Dr. E. B. Strauss, the psychologist, tells us here that there are whole chunks of human experience and whole chapters in the history of human thought that he remained blind to. And in a remark of Mr. Nicholas Bentley's when he is discussing the painter-who-might-have-been we also come up against the problem of his place in English imaginative literature: "I fancy he might have been too preoccupied with problems of subject and technique and hardly susceptible enough to the kinds of emotional experience that result in works like those of Rouault or Sutherland or Nash." What an anonymous reviewer has called the lack of the dimension of tension, difficulty, anxiety, of the toughness of human things, is surely the reason for Chesterton's limited appeal to our generation. But our generation stands too close to him to represent the judgment of posterity.

A. MACKENZIE SMITH

The Man on a Donkey, by H. F. M. Prescott (Eyre and Spottiswoode 25s).

IT IS ALMOST STARTLING to find that anyone to-day should choose to write so long a book (there are two volumes, but the pagination is continuous, 1 to 706) and that publishers should be willing to produce it. It proves that, after all, our generation is able to read and is not so superficial as to disdain to enquire into its ancestry. Indeed, the book really should be read twice, because of the multiplicity of places and persons dealt with in brief episodes, otherwise we may miss the marvellous pattern into which the tapestry-threads are being woven, depicting English life from 1509 to 1539. Miss Prescott provides in an appendix a formidable list of ancient and modern documents and books that she has consulted, and while this ensures a picture perfect (we think) in all its details, it is her amazing genius which causes the whole thing to come alive. The leading personages in the book are of course historical in the documentary sense: but the invented characters are quite as real as the rest. And this is even more remarkable because Miss Prescott denies herself many a chance of sensationalism, like the death of Ann Boleyn; and she does not render those who win all our pity, like Queen Katherine, unduly attractive. Certainly she indicates with delicate precision the degeneration of King Henry, the corruption due to power, the cynicism of politics, and, in sudden contrast, the spiritual purity of More. Nor is she concerned only with the court and its grandees. There is a complete picture of Marrick Nunnery (and, literally, a plan of it founded on a sixteenth-century one); and her description of convent-life makes us indeed sad that it was not reformed from within itself as it was under the great abbesses of France. The book culminates with the collapse of the Pilgrimage of Grace and the sorrowful execution of Robert Aske; but meanwhile we have been looking through the eyes and feeling with the very nerves of a hundred men and women, and children, down to the poorest little outcasts, and alas through those of reformers—possibly sincere, but at times sickeningly blasphemous—and of a priest who thinks that sin has become part of his very self (yet we find hints for hope). But “culminates,” used above, was the wrong word. The author herself says, in a “Note,” that “over against the world of sixteenth century England is set that other world, whose light is focused, as through a burning-glass, in the half-crazy mind of Malle, the serving-woman.” Enough to say that this girl is akin to Juliana of Norwich, not to the Nun of Kent; and indeed that “light” somehow transfigures the very landscape that Miss Prescott so exquisitely depicts.

The Mill on the Po, by Riccardo Bacchelli. Translated by Frances Frenaye (Hutchinson 15s).

A GAIN WE REJOICE that there are modern authors who have the courage to write on the heroic scale; and even this book of 591 pages combines only two of the three parts of the original work, and certain passages, held to be meaningless for any but Italian readers whose memories are long, have been excised. The period here covered is that between Napoleon's retreat from Moscow to 1872, the earliest days of unified Italy. But the story develops essentially within Lombardy, recalling the famous French *romans de province*, and in particular along the great Lombard river with its immemorial mills, that river which at one time was the iniquitous and preposterous frontier between Italy and Austria. Earnestly as we pray for the resurrection of Austria, *that* line can be no more drawn! The author's family lived through all the relevant years, and it has been his wish "to celebrate the tenacious humility of the little people of Italy, who have kept faith with themselves and refused to be crushed by the almost overwhelming burden of their history." He can work into his tissue every tiniest factor of North Italian life; he can live with, and in, every sort of person; without preaching he can convey how radically Catholic is the Italian even when at his most anti-clerical (I do not allude to that tiny minority which is really de-Italianized and in every other way degenerate. Such men exist in every land). Few indeed have written thus. Miss Prescott has recently made us live through a much briefer tract of our own history: Sigrid Undset did the same for a remoter Scandinavia: *A Pillar of Fire* revealed a German-Jewish world, contemporary yet unguessed; Poland displayed herself in books by now, we fear, unknown: Russia exhibited to us much of her strange national spirit—but now, of course, though the spirit cannot be assassinated, authors can, and their works, even if conceived, suffer abortion. Alas, ignorance prevents my knowing if anything comparable has been produced in Spain. Now, after Lombardy, let us have Tuscany and Umbria; the "Roman" world, and Southern Italy not condescended to but understood and loved. May many a ruthless realist-optimist Bacchelli arise in Italy to instruct our unimaginative North. There are few books that ought, we feel, to live for ever, but this is assuredly one of them. I, who long ago pored over a manuscript in the grand Langobardic writing, feel that one new strong link has been forged between those ancient days, the day-before-the-day-before-yesterday, and days when men are living now, and we, by the author's help, amongst them.

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ONE of the great occupational risks of business life under the pressure of to-day is that the practical man of affairs neglects his outside reading, and all too easily falls into a narrow circle of immediate preoccupations. There is always loss in this, and the Catholic business or professional man, as a member of the Church Universal, has a particularly strong reason for keeping his mind open to wider horizons. Certainly it was never more necessary than now to follow world happenings. A direct chain of causes and effects ties every business to economical changes in the world, which are themselves as often the consequence as the cause of changes in men's political and social ideas. These ideas in their turn come out of the religions, or irreligions, of contemporary man.

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